GOVERNANCE AND VULNERABILITY IN SMALL ISLAND STATES

By

Ahmed Shukry Hussain

A thesis submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Development Studies

Victoria University of Wellington
2008

*I runga i te kī
He aha I tem ea nui
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata
Nā konei te wero*

*Kaua e hangai he ture
I pērē i te kupenga ika
He here hopo*

Engari, i pērē me te nekeneke tai he ārahi

*What is most important?
It is people, people, people
We should not create policies that are
Like the fishing net
That snares and strangles*

*But like the surging tide
That uplifts and carries forward*

*(Communities and Government – Political for Partnership, Whakatapu Whakaaro, May 2001,
the Community Policy Team, Ministry of Social Policy, New Zealand)*

Abstract

In general, communities in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are socio-economically and environmentally vulnerable due to their geographical and ecological conditions. Small archipelagic states are even more vulnerable in terms of natural and human-induced disasters because of their fragmentation, isolation and smallness.

Good governance is a vital precondition to reduce the vulnerability of these states. This study examines these two correlated phenomena, governance and vulnerability, their inter-related implications and complications, and the role of governance in reducing vulnerability of SIDS and their island communities. It also proposes some practical remedies for the challenges of these communities. Qualitative research using multiple methods, secondary data collection, informal semi-structured interviews, open-ended discussions, informal conversational interviews and direct observations, was carried out through case studies of two archipelagos, the republics of Maldives and Vanuatu. In addition, the New Zealand local government model with a focus on Bay of Plenty Region was also studied in order to seek policy models and best practices from a developed state.

The field inquiry revealed that an effective local governance system is vitally important to address socio-economic and environmental vulnerability of these archipelagic communities. Neither a rigid centralised system, like the Maldives, nor a decentralised system, as in the case of Vanuatu, was found to be appropriate and effective unless certain functions are delegated and local authorities are made self-reliant, financially and functionally self-sufficient and aware of their responsibilities through education, while community members are empowered by providing more socio-economic opportunities.

Based on the research findings, the thesis highlights four key causes of increasing vulnerability in these communities: absence of a reliable outreach mechanism for emergency management, lack of a strong local governance system, scarcity of socio-economic resources and opportunities, and inadequate socio-economic infrastructures. The thesis suggests possible ways forward by proposing a four tier cluster approach with a decentralised emergency management system and local governance model. The transient vulnerability (natural or weather related disasters) of these archipelagic communities cannot be addressed unless their chronic vulnerability, lack of socio-economic opportunities, is addressed through sound local governance.

Acknowledgement

Many factors drew me to pursue this study and key amongst them are that I overheard my father saying to someone once, “You know! One day, I want to see my children achieving the highest level of education”. Since my father is a fisherman and mason from a small island with eight children, his dream has inspired my ongoing concern to understand the social problems associated with vulnerability of the island communities.

I am indebted to many people who have contributed to what I have achieved today in my study. This long intellectual journey would have been impossible without their financial and inspirational support. My sincere thanks and gratefulness are due to NZAID, the government of New Zealand and its generous people for supporting me and my family in all means and providing all comforts during our stay in New Zealand. My appreciations are due to Victoria University of Wellington, especially the Faculty of Science and School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria International team, Library, Victoria Early Childhood Services, Victoria Accommodation Services and Student Finance Scheme, and their staff for their great support in every possible way to make my study success and to give all comforts during our stay in New Zealand.

My study would not have been successful without generous intellectual and kind inspirational support and empathy of my supervisors Dr. Teresia Teaiwa, Professors John Overton, John McKinnon and Vijay Naidu. In fact, their critical comments and suggestions are the strengths of my research and the thesis. They have also been kindly supportive beyond my academic life and a consoling source in all difficult times. My heartfelt respect, gratitude and best wishes are due to all of them. I am also grateful to my past teachers, lecturers and supervisors at home and abroad for their contributions in my success in what I am today.

The writing of the thesis also would not have been in the final form without continuous support of Dr. Deborah Laurs, from the Student Learning Centre of the VUW, who read and reread my entire work during my study starting from my working proposal to the thesis and helped to make my writing readable and sensible. In fact, she has been filling no less than a supervisory role. Her encouraging words and advice have always been stimulus for my study. My sincere thanks and appreciations are to her and other people in the Centre. I am also thankful to Dr. Deborah for her kind help in proof reading my thesis.

My thanks are due to the ministries, government agencies, councils and atoll offices in the Maldives, Vanuatu and New Zealand for their support and providing me with the data I required for my research. My heartfelt and sincere thanks are due to the members of Island Development Committees, Island Women Development Committees, NGOs, Island and Atoll Chiefs, Offices in the island and atoll offices in the Maldives for their kind assistance during my fieldwork, organising and arranging the meetings and providing me and my family with all comforts.

I am also grateful to every one who supported my fieldwork in the Maldives, especially Mr. Saud Abdullah (then the Atoll chief of the Raa atoll), who was so generous to me and my family during our stay in the atoll and all other staff of the atoll office. My thanks are due to the UNDP, Malé Office, for its support during my fieldwork in *Raa* atoll and providing me two assistants, Mr. Rasheed and Ms. Arfa. Thanks for the two for their team work, logistics, coordination and keen to learn. I am also thankful to Mr. Mahir (then the Atoll chief of Shviyani) for his support. My thanks are also due to Mr. Farook (then the Assistant Director General of the Ministry of Atolls Development) and others, especially my colleagues in the G. Section of the ministry.

My sincere gratitude goes to Mr. Ibrahim Rasheed (*Ibbe*) of the Ministry of Planning and National Development, who provided me with some logistical and technical support and information materials.

My thanks are due to my cousin, Mr. Abdurrazzague, and his family who provided me and my family with accommodation and arranged transportation and acted as the captain and crew of our hired boat for my field trips in Shaviyani atoll. I am also thankful to Mr. Mohamed (*Bodey*), Mr. Hakeem and Mr. Thaufeeque who were part of our team on these trips.

I am indebted to many people in Vanuatu, especially Mr. John Niroa and his secretary Ms. Moriel Saimon from the Ministry of Education, who arranged the research permit, all the meetings in Port Vila and Tanna and provided transportation and logistical support in Tanna. My sincere appreciations are due to Ms. Nancy, an education officer in Tanna, who was with me during all the meetings with locals, as a guide, helper and sometimes acted as a translator. I would also like to give my sincere thanks and appreciations to Jean-Pierre, Professor John Lynch and other staff of USP on Emalus Campus for their kind assistance and helping me feel at home during my three weeks stay in Port Vila. I am also grateful to Ms. Anne, the devoted librarian at the National Library of Vanuatu, who supported me by locating all the required resources about Vanuatu and made all the photocopies I needed.

My sincere thanks are due to Ms. Kesaia Paulo, Professors Ron Duncan and Robert Robertson and Dr. Mahendra Reddy at University of South Pacific for their kind assistance and all others who supported during my stay in Suva and I am grateful to the USP, Fiji, permitting me to have access to its library's Pacific collection and other resources and facilities.

I am grateful to my friend Hannalinne Nalau Ilo and her family whom I first met at Australian National University, Canberra, for her kind support during my stay in Vanuatu and her continuous support in providing me with new information material whenever I needed. I am also grateful to her for reading the final draft chapters, five and six, providing valuable comments and corrections of some factual errors.

My thanks are due to Bryan Riesterer (then the deputy chairman of Environment Bay of Plenty) and John Forbes (Mayor of Opoitiki) for their kind support when I was in

the Bay of Plenty Region and others including those with whom I had appointments but could not meet because of my sickness due to bad hay-fever. I also would like to thank Mr. Mike Reid, Manager Governance of Local Government New Zealand, for providing me with his insights on the local government system and also reading my draft chapters, seven and eight, for his very encouraging critical comments.

I am grateful to all informants and participants of my study in the Maldives, Vanuatu and Bay of Plenty of the Region, New Zealand. Without their kind participation and their frank, valid and informative input the research would have remained incomplete. Thanks to you all and I dedicate my research to you all.

My thanks are due to all my current and past office mates, Claire, Faisal, Luke, Alok and Kyro, and my other PhD and Masters colleagues, Dona, Richard, Abu, Shabana, Riyadh, Eddie, Jane, Eunica and Kate, whose devotion, self-esteem and determination for their studies always motivated me and inspired to achieve my goals.

My sincere thanks are due to all fellow friends, colleagues and families who have been in touch with their well-wishes and I am grateful to all the Maldivian students and their families and friends who have been part of our small community in Wellington, whose compassion and caring for me and family are unforgettable. They have been always supportive in our difficult times. I am also thankful to fellow friends and all well wishers elsewhere in New Zealand.

I am specially thankful and grateful to my parents and parents-in-law, whose love, care, prayers and best wishes encouraged and enabled me to withstand all challenges and keep my self-esteem and motivation unchanged towards achieving my goals, even in difficult times. My sincere thanks are due to all my siblings, brothers and sisters-in-laws, uncles and aunts, nephews, nieces and cousins for their love and support in all means, financially and inspirationally. Without their continuous support, encouragement and best wishes I would not have achieved what I have achieved today.

Finally, I am grateful and thankful to my wife, Jazmeena, who gave up her career to accompany me and went through all pains of my temperament and frustrations during this long and tedious journey, during which she suffered the losses of her father and grand mother. You have been a wonderful companion; I wish you all the best. My love also goes to my son, Jasim and daughter, Leem, to whom I owe the fatherly affection from which they have been deprived due to the busy life of my study. You are inspirational!

Table of contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgement	ii
Table of contents	v
List of Figures.....	ix
List of Tables	x
List of Boxes.....	xi
Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	xii
Chapter 1: An Overview of the Study	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Governance and vulnerability in Small Island Developing States: Meanings, definitions, and the coverage.....	3
1.2.1 Governance	4
1.2.2 Vulnerability	5
1.2.3 Island and archipelago	6
1.2.4 Small states	8
1.2 Governance and vulnerability: A concern for SIDS.....	10
1.3 Conceptual framework	18
1.4 Rationale for the selection of the topic and its coverage.....	23
1.4 Research goal and objectives	25
1.5 Contribution	26
1.6 Research questions.....	26
1.7 Plan of the thesis	28
Chapter 2: Research Approach.....	31
2.1 Introduction.....	31
2.2 Research method	32
2.3 Data collection	33
2.3.1 Selection of the case study sites.....	34
2.3.1.1 Fieldwork within the case study countries	36
2.3.1.1.1 Fieldwork in the Maldives.....	37
2.3.1.1.2 Fieldwork in Vanuatu.....	41
2.3.1.1.3 Fieldwork in the Bay of Plenty region, New Zealand	42
2.3.2 Sampling.....	43
2.3.3 Methods of data collection.....	44
2.3.3.1 Secondary data collection	44
2.3.3.2 Informal semi-structured interviews	45
2.3.3.3 Open-ended discussions.....	46
2.3.3.4 Informal conversational interviews.....	47
2.3.3.5 Direct observations	47
2.4 Data analysis.....	48

2.5 Limitations and significance	48
2.6 Ethical issues.....	50
2.7 Conclusion.....	51
Chapter 3: Governance and Vulnerability in Development Context	52
3.1 Introduction.....	52
3.2 Governance: the concept, its uses and models	52
3.2.1 Uses of governance.....	56
3.2.2 Models of governance	59
3.3.3 Measuring governance.....	62
3.3 The emergence of ‘good governance’ in development discourse	64
3.4 Linking governance to development and vice versa	72
3.4.1 What is development?	73
3.5 Role of civil society in development	76
3.6 Vulnerability: the concept, its uses and meanings.....	77
3.6.1 Meaning and uses of the vulnerability	78
3.6.1 Economic vulnerability.....	81
3.6.2 Environmental vulnerability	82
3.6.3 Social vulnerability.....	82
3.6.4 Vulnerability assessments.....	83
3.6.5 Vulnerability and poverty: A close-knit relationship.....	87
3.7 Linking vulnerability to development and vice versa	88
3.8 Conclusion: Linking governance and development to vulnerability reduction	91
Chapter 4: Vulnerability in the Context of the Maldives: the Role of Governance in Reducing Vulnerability.....	93
4.1 Introduction.....	93
4.2 The Maldives	94
4.3 Governance and its institutional structure	97
4.3.1 Existing institutional framework for the atolls	99
4.4 Socio-economic conditions.....	102
4.4.1 Economy.....	102
4.4.2 Education.....	108
4.4.3 Health	111
4.5 Physical infrastructure	114
4.5.1 Electricity	114
4.5.2 Harbour and jetties.....	116
4.5.3 Transport and communications.....	117
4.5.4 Water and sanitation	122
4.6 Poverty and vulnerability	123
4.6.1 Measures taken to reduce the poverty and vulnerability.....	128
4.7 Civil society.....	132
4.8 Conclusion.....	133
Chapter 5: Vulnerability in the Context of Vanuatu: the Role of Governance in Reducing Vulnerability.....	135
5.1 Introduction.....	135
5.2 Vanuatu	136
5.3 Governance and its institutional structure	140

5.3.1 Institutional framework for outer-island and village administration	144
5.4 <i>Socio-economic conditions</i>	145
5.4.1 Economy	146
5.4.2 Education	151
5.4.3 Health	156
5.5 <i>Physical infrastructure</i>	158
5.5.1 Electricity	159
5.5.2 Transport and communications	161
5.5.4 Water and sanitation	164
5.6 <i>Poverty and vulnerability</i>	167
5.6.1 Measures taken to reduce poverty and vulnerability	169
5.7 <i>Civil society</i>	171
5.8 <i>Conclusion</i>	173
Chapter 6: Governance and Vulnerability in the Maldives and Vanuatu through People's Perception: A Comparative Analysis	175
6.1 <i>Introduction</i>	175
6.2 <i>A summary comparison of the two contexts, the Maldives and Vanuatu</i>	176
6.2.1 Particularities and commonalities of the two countries	178
6.3 <i>Governance and its institutions</i>	180
6.4 <i>Vulnerability</i>	191
6.5 <i>Poverty</i>	195
6.6 <i>Development</i>	199
6.7 <i>Civil society</i>	203
6.8 <i>Conclusion</i>	208
Chapter 7: Governance, Policy Models and Best Practice: Local Community Empowerment in New Zealand	210
7.1 <i>Introduction</i>	210
7.2 <i>The system of governance in New Zealand</i>	212
7.3 <i>Local governance, institutional structures and functional arrangements</i>	213
7.3.1 Purpose of the local government	214
7.3.2 Divisions of the local government	214
7.3.3 Divisions of the functions of the local government	217
7.3.4 Revenues and funding at the local levels	219
7.3.5 Governance and operational principles	221
7.3.6 Independent bodies involved in promoting and enhancing local interests	222
7.4 <i>Some 'policy models' and 'practices' from the New Zealand model of local government system</i>	224
7.4.1 Brief socio-economic and environmental profile of the Bay of Plenty region	224
7.4.2 Local empowerment: An enhanced local government system with delegated authorities	226
7.4.3 Financial empowerment: Revenue sharing and economic cooperation	228
7.4.4 Local community empowerment: Citizen participation in planning and decision-making process	230
7.4.5 Promotion of socio-economic and environmental well-being: mandating in all policy decisions	233
7.4.6 Civil defence emergency management: Decentralising to the local authorities	234
7.5 <i>Conclusion</i>	238
Chapter 8: Governance Matters: Vulnerability Reduction in Fragmented Island Communities	240

8.1 Introduction	240
8.2 The way forward: Application of the findings and progression of new models	245
8.2.1 Establishment of a viable system for emergency management	246
8.2.2 Establishing a strong local government system	249
8.2.2.1 Tiers of governments in proposed local government model	252
8.2.3 Creation of more socio-economic opportunities.....	261
8.3 Caveats	266
8.4 Implications of the findings for future research	268
Bibliography	269
Appendices.....	292
Appendix I: Details of the preliminary field trips in the Maldives	293
Appendix II: Details of visits, meetings and interviews in Raa atoll of the Maldives	294
Appendix III: Details of visits, meetings and interviews in Shaviyani atoll of the Maldives	297
Appendix IV: Details of the fieldwork in Vanuatu.....	298
Appendix V: Details of visits, meetings and interviews in Fiji	301
Appendix VI: Guide used in the field for methods and sources of data collection and main areas for discussion during the interviews and discussions.....	302
Appendix VII: Request for an advice to obtaining research permit from Vanuatu	306
Appendix VIII: Ethics approval.....	307
Appendix IX: Consent form.....	308
Appendix X: Participant information sheet.....	309

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Categorical distribution of 25 most vulnerable countries in the world	15
Figure 3.1 : Larmour’s use of Polanyi’s forms integration	61
Figure 3.2 : Helu’s model of governance.....	61
Figure 3.3 : Bavinck’s model of interactive governance	63
Figure 3.4: Five years of annual GDP growth of China, Russia, UK, US and Uzbekistan.....	71
Figure 3.5 : From income to HDI – some do better than others	76
Figure 4.1: Maldives map.....	96
Figure 4.2: An illustrative chart of procedural chain of local administration	102
Figure 4.3: Patterns of tourist arrivals from 1979 to 2006	105
Figure 4.4: GDP and GDP growth rates from 1990 to 2006.....	105
Figure 4.5: State, private and CBOs involvement in power supply in the Maldives.....	117
Figure 5.1: Vanuatu map.....	138
Figure 5.2: Contribution to GDP by main sectors.....	147
Figure 5.3: GDP growth chart between 1997 and 2006	149
Figure 5.4: Percentage of working age (15+) population by type of economic activity.....	149
Figure 5.5: Percentage of households by source of lightings	161
Figure 6.1: People’s perceptions on required changes to the system in the Maldives.....	188
Figure 6.2: People’s perceptions on required changes in the system of Vanuatu.....	191
Figure 6.3: People’s perceptions on vulnerability in the Maldives and Vanuatu	194
Figure 7.1: Division of powers of state governance in New Zealand	213
Figure 7.2: Operating revenue of environment Bay of Plenty for the year 2008.....	221
Figure 7.3: Bay of Plenty region and New Zealand map	226
Figure 7.4: Decision-making process for the New Zealand local authorities outlined in LGA ..	232
Figure 7.5: Citizen participation and community empowerment in the local democracy of New Zealand	233
Figure 7.6: Relationship between the core CDEM agencies, government departments, and government and non-government organisations in New Zealand.....	236
Figure 8.1: Managing development in both centrally controlled and local government settings	244
Figure 8.2: Proposed disaster management system for the Maldives and relationship between the core DM agencies.....	248
Figure 8.3: Illustration of proposed local government options	257
Figure 8.4: Governance model: Building blocks for good governance to address vulnerability and promote well-being of the island communities in the Maldives	260
Figure 8.5: Description of ultimate targets resulting from improved and robust socio-economic policies and programmes for island communities in the Maldives... ..	265
Figure 8.6: Process of good governance and separation of powers of state governance.. ..	266

List of Tables

Table 1.1: List of Small Island Developing States (UN members and Non-UN members/associate members of the Regional Commission)	3
Table 1.2: The Commonwealth Composite Vulnerability Index and other indices ordered according to vulnerability score for the 25 most vulnerable developing countries	14
Table 3.1: Governance and its elements from perspectives of international development/aid communities	68
Table 4. 1: Daily per capita median household income of Maldives, Malé and the atolls in nominal and PPPs terms.....	109
Table 4.2: Student enrolment and numbers of schools in Male' and atolls by type of educational institution, 2006	111
Table 4.3: Student enrolment by levels of education and sex in 2006.....	111
Table 4.4: Description of five tiers of public healthcare mechanism and provided services by 2006.....	114
Table 4.5: Number of fixed and mobile phones in the Maldives (October 2007)	122
Table 4.6: Head count ratios based on multiple income poverty lines, Maldives, Malé, and the Atolls in 1997 and 2004 (valued in Rufiyaa, US\$ and PPP\$).....	127
Table 5.1: Exports by major agricultural commodities, 1999-2006.....	150
Table 5.2: Schools by languages and levels of education 1993	153
Table 5.3: Parent's contributions in education as cash and in-kind.....	156
Table 5.4: Numbers of health facilities in Vanuatu between 1999 and 2005.....	158
Table 5.5: Disparities with the provinces in key health indicators (2005).....	159
Table 5.6: Number of Vanuatu households by source of water supply: Urban, rural and total..	166
Table 5.7. Number of Vanuatu households by type of toilet facilities: Rural, urban and total..	167
Table 6.1: Major demographical, geographical and ecological facts of the Maldives and Vanuatu.....	178
Table 6.2: Number of inhabited islands by size and class by percentage of population..	178
Table 6.3: A Summary of characteristics between the Maldives and Vanuatu	180
Table 6.4: A Summary of the main features of the governance systems, the Maldives and Vanuatu.....	183
Table 6.5: Main factors identified for the system not being effective and appropriate in the Maldives	186
Table 6.6: People's perceptions on required changes in the system in the Maldives.....	187
Table 6.7: Main factors identified for the system not being effective in Vanuatu	189
Table 6.8: People's perceptions on required changes to make the system of Vanuatu more effective	190
Table 6.9: Perceived definitions of 'development' by field informants in the Maldives and Vanuatu grouped by types of people	201
Table 6.10: Access to improved water and sanitation, Maldives and Vanuatu, 2004.....	203
Table 6.11: People's perception on defining civil society in the rural areas	205
Table 7.1: Key socio-economic facts for the Bay of Plenty region and New Zealand.....	226
Table 7.2: A comparative analysis of local governance in the Maldives, Vanuatu and New Zealand.....	228
Table 7.3: A comparative analysis of the disaster management systems in the Maldives, Vanuatu and New Zealand.....	238
Table 8.1: Description of proposed sub-tiers for the local government system	256
Table 8.2: Numbers of inhabited and uninhabited island and population of each atoll in the Maldives	258

List of Boxes

Box 1.1: Factors in economic vulnerability of SIDS.....	11
Box 1.2: Factors in environment vulnerability of SIDS	12
Box 1.3: Factors in social vulnerability in SIDS	13
Box 2.1: The Republic of Maldives	34
Box 2.2: The Republic of Vanuatu.....	35
Box 2.3: Raa Atoll	38
Box 2.4: Shaviyani Atoll.....	39
Box 2.5: Shefa Province	41
Box 2.6: Tafea Province.....	42
Box 2.7: The Bay of Plenty Region.....	43
Box 3.1: Selected definitions of governance	55
Box 3.2: Selected Definitions of Vulnerability	80
Box 5.1: A story of a farmer in Mele village, Vanuatu.....	140

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADCs	Atoll Development Committees
ADP	Atoll Development Plan
ALGIM	Association of Local Government Information
ANU	Australian National University
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
AVC	Airports Vanuatu Limited
BERL	Business and Economic Research Limited
BOP	Bay of Plenty
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CDEM	Civil Defence Emergency Management
CDP	Committee for Development Policy
CDR	Central Development Region
CDR	Central Development Region
CEOs	Chief Executive Officers
CG	Central Government
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CRED	Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disaster
CRP	Comprehensive Reform Programme
CVI	Composite Vulnerability Index
DESP	Department of Economics and Sector Planning
DMCs	Disaster Management Centres
DMSs	Disaster Management Sections
DMUs	Disaster Management Units
DRC	Decentralisation Review Commission
DRP	Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party
E. BoP	Environment Bay of Plenty
ECLAC	Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EFA	Education for All
EMP	Education Master Plan
EU	Energy Unit
EU	European Union
EconVI	Economic Vulnerability Index
EnVI	Environmental Vulnerability Index
FSPI	Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International
GDP	Gross Domestic Development
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GNH	Gross National Happiness
GVI	Geographic Vulnerability Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HPI	Happy Planet Index
HPI	Human Poverty Index
HVI	Human Vulnerability Index
IAD	Integrated Atoll Development
IDCs	Island Development Committees

IDP	Islamic Democratic party
IDP	Island Development Plan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGENIUM	Association of Local Government Engineering New Zealand Incorporated
IPS	Institute of Pacific Studies
IWDCs	Island Women's Development Committees
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LEA	Local Electoral Act
LGA 2002	Local Government Act 2002
LGCs	Local Government Councils
MCDEM	Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDP	Maldivian Democratic Party
MoAD	Ministry of Atolls Development
MoGF	Ministry of Gender and Family
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoTCA	Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPHRE	Ministry of Planning, Human Resource and Environment
MPND	Ministry of Planning and National Development
MSDP	Maldives Social Democratic Party
NCCs	National Council of Chiefs
NCDM	National Centre for Disaster Management
NCDR	Northern Central Development Region
NDMC	National Disaster Management Centre
NDMO	National Disaster Management
NDP	National Development Plan
NDR	Northern Development Region
NEF	New Economic Foundation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPM	New Public Management
NZ	New Zealand
NZAID	New Zealand's International Aid & Development Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAA	Priorities and Action Agenda
PDCP	Population and Development Consolidation Programme
PHA	Participatory Hardship Assessment
PMDCs	Pacific Developing Members Countries
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RCs	Regional Councils
RDBs	Regional Development Boards
RDMCs	Regional Disaster Management Centres
RDMO	Regional Development Management Office
RDP	Regional Development Policy
REDI	Rural Economic Development Initiatives
Rf	Rufiya
SCDR	Southern Central Development Region
SDR	Southern Development Region
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOLGM	Society of Local Government Managers
SOPAC	South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission
SSRF	Sarakata Special Reserve Fund

STELCO	State Electricity Company
TAM	Telecommunications Authority of Maldives
TVL	Telecom Vanuatu Limited
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations Commission for Human Rights
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commission for Human Rights
UN-OHRLLS	UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
UNU	United Nations University
USA	United States of America
USAID	U. S. Agency for International Development
USP	University of South Pacific
VANGO	Vanuatu Association of Non-Governmental Organisation
VIP	Ventilated Improved Pit Toilet
VNSO	Vanuatu National Statistics Office
VPA I	Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment I
VPA II	Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment II
VPS	Vanuatu Poverty Survey
VUW	Victoria University of Wellington

Chapter 1

An Overview of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Due to the limited nature of their socio-economic and environmental endowment, Small Island Developing States (SIDS)¹ (see Table 1.1) are extremely vulnerable. Isolation and distance between small communities compound their susceptibility to natural and human-induced disasters, such as cyclones and tsunamis, coral and sand mining and ineffective and inappropriate policies. Their scattered islands make administration difficult and expensive, and the impact of a single major event like a tsunami can place the survival of a whole resident population at risk. A survey carried out by Joint Task Force mounted by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the World Bank found that, of the 25 most vulnerable countries in the world, 68 percent are SIDS and 20 percent of these are Least Developed Countries (LDCs) (Commonwealth, 1997c; Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States, 2000, p. 12; 2003, p. 8, 2004, p. I) (see Table 1.2 and Figure 1.1). The underlying challenge is that most developing island states are highly vulnerable to natural hazards and, despite growing awareness of both the problem and corrective provisions in the form of policies and programmes designed to address the issue, vulnerability is increasing rather than declining. Most often these policies and programmes are implemented on an *ad hoc* basis as international funds are made available rather than built into the governance system as fully integrated structural components and, even if they are sustainable, are not always maintained.

The central question of this research is the extent to which increased vulnerability of archipelagic states among SIDS is associated with governance. Hence, the thesis argues that governance is a precondition to reduce the vulnerability of these states and that governance and vulnerability are interconnected phenomena. The thesis

¹ “Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are small island and low-lying coastal countries that share similar sustainable development challenges, including small population, lack of resources, remoteness, susceptibility to natural disasters, excessive dependence on international trade and vulnerability to global developments. In addition, they suffer from lack of economies of scale, high transportation and communication costs, and costly public administration and infrastructure” (www.sidnet.org/2.html, on 26 October 2009).

aims to understand the links between these phenomena, their inter-related implications and complications, and the role of governance in reducing the vulnerability of SIDS and their island communities. The thesis therefore, seeks evidence to document the argument that vulnerability is part and parcel of governance and argues that vulnerability can be reduced when both vulnerability and governance are treated as interconnected phenomena. The thesis also aims to identify and suggest possible and practical measures for SIDS in order to reduce the socio-economic and environmental vulnerability of states, especially communities most exposed to natural hazards. The argument will be based on insights from the literature and on findings from fieldwork and acquired knowledge, because local problems can better be understood and dealt with through local knowledge. Since both governance and vulnerability are people-centred phenomena, people and island communities are the central focus in this thesis and I will use people's experiences and their perceptions as the basis for all definitions and arguments.

The research followed a comparative methodology focused on the administrative systems, institutions, policies and practices (successes and failures) pertaining in three countries: two small island developing states, the Republics of the Maldives and Vanuatu, and the Bay of Plenty region of New Zealand. The first two countries, the Maldives and Vanuatu, were selected because they are both archipelagos in two different regions, South Asia and the South Pacific, respectively, and have been identified as among the most vulnerable countries in the world (Commonwealth, 1997c). The two have different governance systems: the Maldives has a centralised governance system (no local government) and Vanuatu has a decentralised governance system with provincial governments. The third country, New Zealand, with focus on its Bay of Plenty Region, is chosen as a developed country for comparative purposes as an example of best practice. Ultimately, however, the main objective of this study is to address the socio-economic and environmental vulnerability issues of the island communities in the Maldives by learning lessons from the other two case studies.

Table 1.1: List of Small Island Developing States (UN members and Non-UN members/associate members of the Regional Commission)

State/Country	Land (km ²)	Population	GDP PPP	State/Country	Land (km ²)	Population	GDP PPP
Africa							
Cape Verde*	4,033	415,294	1,400	Federated States of Micronesia	702	108,155	2,000
Comoros*	2,235	651,901	700	Fiji	18,274	880,874	5,800
Guinea-Bissau*	36,125	1,388,363	900	French Polynesia	4,167	266,339	17,500
Mauritius	2,040	1,220,481	11,400	Guam	549	166,090	21,000
Sao Tome and Principe*	964	181,565	1,200	Kiribati*	726	100,798	800
Seychelles	455	80,832	7,800	Marshall Islands	181	52,738	16,000
Asia							
Maldives*	298	339,330	3,900	Nauru	21	12,809	5,000
Singapore	618	4,353,893	23,700	New Caledonia	11,060	213,679	15,000
Timor-Leste*	15,007	1,019,252	500	Niue	260	2,156	3,600
Caribbean							
Antigua and Barbuda	442	68,320	11,000	Palau	459	20,016	9,000
Bahamas	13,878	299,697	16,800	Papua New Guinea	462,840	5,420,280	2,200
Barbados	430	278,289	16,200	Samoa*	2,831	177,714	5,600
Cuba	110,861	11,308,764	2,800	Solomon Islands*	28,896	523,617	1,700
Dominica	751	69,278	5,400	Tonga	650	110,237	2,200
Dominican Republic	48,511	8,833,634	6,000	Tuvalu*	26	11,468	1,100
Grenada	344	89,357	5,000	Vanuatu*	12,189	202,609	2,900
Haiti	27,750	7,656,166	1,600	Latin America			
Jamaica	10,990	2,713,130	3,800	Belize	22,696	272,445	49,000
St. Kitts and Nevis	266	38,836	8,800	Guyana	214,969	705,803	4,000
St. Lucia	622	164,213	5,400	Suriname	163,265	436,935	3,500
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	388	117,193	2,900	Latin America & Caribbean			
Trinidad and Tobago	5,130	1,096,585	2,900	Anguila	102	13,008	8,600
Oceania/Pacific							
American Samoa	199	57,902	8,000	Aruba	193	71,218	28,000
Commonwealth of Northern Marianas	472	78,252	12,500	British Virgin Islands	153	22,187	16,000
Cook Islands	240	21,200	5,000	Montserrat	102	9,245	3,400
				Netherlands Antilles	960	218,126	11,400
				Puerto Rico	9,104	3,897,960	16,800
				U.S. Virgin Islands	352	108,775	17,200

Source: Adopted and extracted from (CIA, n.d.; UN-OHRLLS, n.d.). **Note:** *Italics* indicate Non-UN Member states, blue fonts indicates archipelagos and asterisks indicate LDCs

1.2 Governance and vulnerability in Small Island Developing States: Meanings, definitions, and the coverage

At the outset of the thesis, it is important to clarify and discuss the terms included in its coverage. Taken together the terms outline the complex characteristics of Small Island States. The key terms also explore factors related to a vulnerable segment of the world's population. Though there is "no wholly agreed definition" (Commonwealth, 1997b, p. 8) for some of these words, it is very important to

appreciate the meanings of the key words, *governance*, *vulnerability*, *small states*, and *island* and *archipelago*.

1.2.1 Governance

The term ‘governance’ has many different meanings depending on the context in which it is used (Rhodes, 1997, pp. 15, 46-47). Governance refers to leading a state and its communities with responsibilities and vision in a highly adaptive manner in any given circumstance (Mothe, 2006, p. 96). Governance is most often referred to as “management of a society’s physical and social resources” (Duncan, 2005, p. 2). As Larmour (1996b, p. 1) notes, the World Bank’s definition of governance is most prominent in development discourse. Governance is “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s socio-economic resources” (World Bank, 1992, p. 3). The Asian Development Bank (Mellor & Jabes, 2004, p. 3) also defines the term ‘good governance’ with similar wording but more emphasis on its development context, as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development”. In a broad scenario, governance is meant to enhance and foster the institutional capacity of the government in order to create strong coordination between partners of government, state, private and civil society (Huffer & Molisa, 1999b, pp. 3-4). One can argue, based on the given definitions, that the term governance has different meanings for different things, people and organisations based on the purpose and context (Mellor & Jabes, 2004, p. 3), but in general it refers to government and the process of management.

It is believed that a government or state can be considered as ‘good’ when its people are provided with three very basic needs: economic security, social services and physical security or peace (The Commonwealth Foundation, 1999, p. 85). The World Development Report for 2000 (World Bank, 2000/2001, p. 6), in its proposed strategy for poverty reduction, outlines three approaches: promoting opportunity, facilitating empowerment, and enhancing security. Similar strategies can be applied to reduce vulnerability. These approaches cannot be achieved without good governance since they are part of its very vital elements. Regardless of the importance of governance and its contemporary ideations, the thesis argues that there

is no such thing as ‘one size fits all’ and, whatever system is employed, it should be a people-centred system which functions for the well-being of people. Indeed, a well-established and responsive system will have regard for the geographical nature of the state and consider its socio-cultural and environmental values.

1.2.2 Vulnerability

The term vulnerability has been used in various fields of study, like social science, geography, and environmental science and epidemiology, but sometimes with significantly distinct perceptions. Although one may notice that the term ‘vulnerability’ is used most often in discussions of disasters (Twigg & Bhatt, 1998, p. 5), vulnerability is currently also used in the fields of risk, hazard, disaster management, climate change, environment and development studies (Weichselgartner, 2001, p. 87). “Vulnerable” and “vulnerability” are common terms in development discourses and overused as alternatives for “poor” and “poverty” (Chambers, 2006, p. 33). Campbell (2003, p. 97), in his exploration of vulnerability, lists some 18 connotations with synonyms and antonyms ranging from weak, powerless, female, and nature to dependent, all of which correspond to this argument. Vulnerability, therefore, is a dynamic and multi-dimensional concept which can be used in different contexts in the developmental discourses, such as socio-economic, cultural, gender, political and environmental, income, health and poverty related issues (Campbell, 2003; Chambers, 2006; Ramachandran & Eastman, 1996; Twigg & Bhatt, 1998; World Bank, 2000/2001). In general terms, Chambers (2006, p. 33) defines vulnerability as defencelessness, insecurity, and exposure to risk, shocks and stress, and he differentiates ‘vulnerability’ by pointing out that it does not mean “lack or want” as does “poverty”. Twigg and Bhatt (1998, pp. 5-6) (quoting Warmington, 1995:1; OECD-DAC, 1994:8), define the term ‘vulnerability’ in the context of socio-economics as the following:

A condition or set of conditions which adversely affect people’s ability to prepare for, withstand and/ or respond to a hazard”.

or

“Concerns the propensity of a society to experience substantial damage, disruption and casualties as a result of hazard.

The risk that a household or an individual experiences vulnerability through an occurrence of income and health poverty for a period of time could be also defined as

income and health vulnerability (World Bank, 2000/2001, p. 19). The probability of someone being exposed to other socio-political and environmental risks will also come under the definitions of vulnerability such as socio-political violence, crimes, natural disasters, and being pulled out of school (World Bank, 2000/2001). In the same vein, Clark (J. Clark, 1991, p. 18) explains various other causes of vulnerability such as exploitation, physical incapacity or social conventions (e.g. the dowry system which brings a negative impact on socio-economic aspects of families and life threatening risks to girls and women in some Asian cultures). Vulnerability, therefore, can extend beyond disaster measures.

It is believed that people with lower coping abilities who are more exposed to vulnerability have a higher risk than those with high coping abilities who are less exposed to vulnerability (Ramachandran & Eastman, 1996, p. 2). Campbell (2003, p. 97), in his discussions on definitions and meanings of vulnerability, argues that “being vulnerable also often incorporates having a lack of agency, or an inability to respond to duress or hardship”. Vulnerability, therefore, has implications beyond the disaster discourse (Lewis, 1999, p. 39) and is, for some places, associated with livelihoods, coping with the limitations of socio-economic opportunities, as, for instance, people living in isolated communities on the remote islands of archipelagos. Hence, the thesis argues that attempts made to reduce vulnerability should not just focus on the impact of natural hazards or as a response to disaster; rather reducing vulnerability should be a continuous process within the system. Vulnerability reduction should encompass ongoing policies and activities, as much as all development plans and projects pursued by the system under review. The thesis, therefore, focuses on this broad aspect.

1.2.3 Island and archipelago

Whether they are *continental* or *oceanic*, islands are completely surrounded by water (Royle, 2007, p. 34). The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea defines an island as “a naturally formed area of land, surrounded by water, which is above water at high tide” (UN, 1982, p. Article 121), and can be designated, within its territorial sea, as an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) (Dundua, 2006, p. 60). Although islands have some similarities in nature, they are diverse geographically and

ecologically and vary in size. An archipelago is identified as “an extensive group of islands” (Royle, 2007, p. 34). As articulated by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UN, 1982, p. Article 46), an archipelago is:

a group of islands, including parts of islands, interconnecting waters and other natural features which are so closely interrelated that such islands, waters and other natural features form an intrinsic geographical, economic and political entity, or which historically have been regarded as such.

Archipelagic states, therefore, are “constituted wholly by one or more archipelagos and may include other islands” (UN, 1982, p. Article 46).

Some island states are single islands with mixed features of flat and highland terrain, such as Barbados; others are archipelagos, constituting of groups of atolls or coral islands with very low-lying and narrow land features like Tuvalu; some have mixed features of low-lying and mountainous terrain, for example Vanuatu; some have large numbers of limestone, coral and volcanic islands, for example, Tonga; and others are characterised by many flat and very low-lying coral islands, such as the Maldives (Bass & Dalal-Clayton, 1995, p. 3; Lewis, 1999, p. 20).

Overton and Thaman divide Pacific islands into two bio geographical categories: “the low islands with coral reefs and atolls and the high islands with volcanic and tectonic land forms” (1999, pp. 20-24). They describe the first as extremely fragile with unique environments and “very tight environmental constraints by way of scarce fresh water, very limited biodiversity, poor soils and small land areas and little or no mineral resources” (Overton & Thaman, 1999, p. 23). The second category is described as comparatively better off than atolls, having a “hospitable environment” for human habitation with a wider range of natural resources but still relatively fragile in their geography and ecology (Overton & Thaman, 1999, p. 25).

Generally speaking, some of the island nations are rich in minerals and others have only potential tourist attractions, such as white beaches with shallow lagoons. Some are closer to continental centres than others. Nevertheless, the most critical characteristics inherent in some of these island states are smallness, isolation and dispersion of communities, which constitute their overall vulnerability. Due to such

factors, island communities are more exposed to internal and external shocks than the mainland communities. Therefore, they are vulnerable in terms of lack of basic services and necessities for a number of reasons, such as dependence on imported foods and other consumable goods, reliance on rainwater catchments, openness to ecological and environmental problems and the high unit cost of accessibility to socio-economic infrastructure.

1.2.4 Small states

There is no agreed definition of smallness when the term is used to describe a country, and all definitions are to some extent arbitrary and constantly being revised (Commonwealth, 1997a, p. 8). The definitions of 'smallness' used in most of the literature are based on various indicators, such as area, population and economic resource base (Baker, 2000, pp. 26-31). The Commonwealth in its definition of smallness takes the criterion of population alone and initially defined it as "one with a population of around one million or less" (Commonwealth, 1997b). However, this has been revised to 1.5 million to adjust to world population increases (Commonwealth, 1997b, p. 9).

Considering the literal meaning and development context, a small state can be considered as a state with a small population in relation to land area and a small economy with limited resources. A small island state, therefore, can be defined as "a state covering generally less than 1000 square kilometres with a population under a million" (Bass & Dalal-Clayton, 1995, p. 8). However, the United Nations' adopted list of Small Island Developing States (see Table 1.1) shows an enormous range both in land size and population, starting from Nauru with 21 square kilometres to Papua New Guinea with 462,840 square kilometres, with populations ranging from 2,156 to 11,308,764, respectively (see Table 1.1). On the list, 80 percent of island states have populations of under a million and 29 percent have less than 1000 square kilometres of land area. Moreover, nearly 73 percent of SIDS have populations of less than half a million and 39 percent have an area of less than 500 square kilometres. Of those 51 SIDS listed by UN, 41 percent are archipelagos and, of these archipelagic states, 59 percent have less than 1000 square kilometres of land area, having an average land mass of 417 square kilometres (see Table 1.1). This explains why there is an

inconsistency in the definition of smallness even among world-bodies. For the purpose of the thesis, a small state is defined as a state of less than 15,000 square kilometres with a population of under a million and focus is given to the small, developing archipelagos. In other words, one may argue that another geopolitical group is emerging amongst SIDS, states with a population of under a million scattered throughout a large group of islands, the archipelagos.

At the beginning, it is also vital to mention that the study will not be confined by the key terms introduced above; other key terms in development discourse will be introduced when required. In particular, the terms, ‘development’ and ‘civil society’, are crucial terms for any people-centred topic in development studies and, therefore, these two terms are the main ‘spheres of influence’ for the study, which will be discussed in chapter three.

Having explained these meanings and definitions, one can easily imagine the unique features and characteristics of the island states, which are not common to other countries. How vulnerable are people in small island communities where they have limited socio-economic resources and fewer avenues for economic activities? One could question whether ‘governance’ could play a major role in the development and well-being of these vulnerable communities. If so, what should be the concept of ‘governance’: a universal concept within the context of aid agents or one that varies according to the individual country and its people’s perspective? One wonders if any kind of governing system could overcome the problems of these countries without a key role for, and the participation of, its people presented here as civil society.

In fact, without an inclusive, cohesive and people-centred system, states with small areas of land and geographically dispersed and isolated communities are likely to have administrative problems, socio-economic constraints, and be disposed to natural and human-induced disasters. Moreover, they may be vulnerable to internal security and external shocks.

1.2 Governance and vulnerability: A concern for SIDS

Governance and vulnerability are major challenges and concerns for SIDS in their socio-economic and political development. The problems of SIDS have been recognised in international fora since the past two decades or so, starting from the *UN Earth Summit on Environment and Development* in 1992 at Rio de Janeiro, which was the outcome of UN General Assembly resolution 44/228 in 1989 (UN, 1989). The result of the summit was the *Rio Declaration* and consequently *Agenda 21*. In its programme areas outlined in the agenda, special focus was given to small island states. This was an important turning point for the development of SIDS and the consequent reaction of the world-bodies was the *Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States* in 1994 at Barbados in which the main focus was SIDS. The outcome of the conference was the *Declaration of Barbados* and its *Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States*, which covered all challenging areas of development in SIDS including natural and environmental disasters, national institutions and administrative capacity.

As a result of these important events in the late twentieth century, the problems and standpoint of SIDS have been put on the agenda of international development discussions and brought to world attention. The UN, World Bank, Commonwealth Secretariat and other International Organisations have focused a great deal of effort on this new geopolitical grouping, SIDS. Coalitions and alliances of island states, specifically the low-lying coastal countries, have emerged all over the world, such as the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and other associations and organisations in different regions of the island states (SIDS, 2003, p. 49). As an outcome of these efforts, the UN has made a special point of addressing the special needs of the small island states in the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) (UN, 2008). Governance and vulnerability are, therefore, areas of special need for the small island states.

Although every state included in the SIDS category has been struggling to overcome the problems both within and beyond its capacity through international efforts, still the problems remain. The high unit cost of government functions, limited qualified

human resources, and lack of well-established transport and communication networks are identified as some of key challenges and constraints. The geographically dispersed nature of these communities hinders the improvement of governance and provision of basic services. As a result, some SIDS continue to face increasing socio-economic and environmental vulnerability, and growing disparities between geographically dispersed island communities and urban islands (See Boxes 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3).

The literature concerning the problems of SIDS has identified some inherent characteristics such as small size, isolation, geographical and ecological nature, fragility, insularity, and remoteness, especially for archipelagos (Armstrong & Read, 2004; Briguglio, 2003, 2004; Easter, 1999; Herrmann, Ronneberg, Brewster, & Dengo, 2004; SOPAC, 2000, 2002; UNCTAD, 1983). Most of the literature points to a number of factors which are significant to determine the vulnerability of SIDS, like lack of economic diversification, trade dependence and the impact of natural disasters which are considered as both inherent and human-induced or anthropogenic factors (Briguglio, 2004; Easter, 1999; SOPAC, 2002; Witter, et al., 2002). Human-induced or anthropogenic factors include policies, human behavioural factors harming the environment, like coral mining, sand mining, deforestation, and technological errors. However, some of the special features and factors of SIDS are considered as economic vulnerability and others as environmental vulnerability. The economic vulnerability of the SIDS is recognised as higher than the rest of the world because SIDS are highly exposed to external shocks (UNDP, 2002). Box 1.1 shows some of the inherent factors of the SIDS which lead to economic vulnerability.

Box 1.1: Factors in economic vulnerability of SIDS

- Geographic isolation
- Land area constraints
- Limited natural resources and high import content
- Small economies and limited diversification possibilities
- Dependence on a narrow range of exports
- High degree of economic openness
- Poorly developed socio-economic infrastructure with limited capacity and high per unit costs on provision and accessibility

Sources: Adopted from (Armstrong & Read, 2004; Briguglio, 2003, 2004; Hay, et al., 2004; Howorth, 2002; SOPAC, 2002; Witter, Briguglio, & Bhuglah, 2002).

Environmental vulnerability is concerned with the natural ecological and biological systems such as reef, coastal areas and marine resources, fresh water and forests. Box 1.2 demonstrates environment and climate change vulnerability related factors. Often these factors are identified and discussed together without any separation in the literature, as in Briguglio, 2004; SOPAC 2002; and Witter et al., 2002. For clarity, I have tried to separate these interrelated factors, though they are “interactive and sometimes could not be considered in isolation” (SOPAC, 2002, p. 6).

Box 1.2: Factors in environment vulnerability of SIDS

- Small physical size and dispersal of communities
- Flat and Low-lying land features (especially, in the case of archipelagos)
- Ecological uniqueness and fragility
- Rapid human population growth and high densities
- Waste management problems due to small territory and dispersion of the communities
- Sensitive to and exposed to extremely damaging natural disasters
- Susceptible to climate change and sea level rise
- Poorly developed socio-economic infrastructure with limited capacity

Sources: Adopted from (Armstrong & Read, 2004; Briguglio, 2003, 2004; Campbell, 2003; Hay, et al., 2004; Howorth, 2002; SOPAC, 2002; Witter, et al., 2002).

Social vulnerability is an important area for development, with work done on social vulnerability in the Caribbean states, such as that by Godfrey St. Bernard's (2007), Cletus Springer, Lolita Gibbons, and Bikenibeu Paeniu (2002), and the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)², emphasising its close relationship with SIDS. Social inequalities are a product of social vulnerability and become influential factors in reducing people's defences (Cutter, Boruff, & Sirley, 2003). Some of the major influential factors in social vulnerability identified in social science include: lack of access to resources; limited access to political participation; social capital and social networks; beliefs and customs; and provision of and accessibility to well-established infrastructure and lifelines (Cutter, et al., 2003, p.

² In 2001, the ECLAC published a document titled as *Quality of Life – A Compendium of Social Statistics of Five Caribbean Countries (1995-2001)*, which documents social concerns of five Caribbean countries; Belize, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and Grenadines countries (G. S. Bernard, 2007).

254). In a broad sense, social vulnerability explains the degree of a likely adverse impact on a society by exposure to stresses, shocks and hazards which may have been caused by internal or external factors or by both, such as through economic strife, environmental changes and government policies (Briguglio, 2003, p. 4; Springer, et al., 2002, p. 2; UNDP, 2002, p. 8).

The adverse impact of social vulnerability may be higher on SIDS, due to the raised degree of economic vulnerability (Briguglio, 2003, p. 4). It has been claimed that social vulnerabilities are no more endemic to SIDS than other countries, but the recurrence is comparatively higher than other developing countries and the adverse impact could last for an extremely long time (UNDP, 2002, p. 8). Moreover, it is argued that when entire “ecosystems are vulnerable to destruction, livelihood security is often under threat” (Springer, et al., 2002). Box 1.3 lists some of the major factors influencing social vulnerability in SIDS.

Box 1.3: Factors in social vulnerability in SIDS

- Small physical size and dispersal of communities
- Growing population and changing consumption patterns
- Poor socio-economic services in outer-islands and high unit cost of accessibility to the services
- Loss of traditional knowledge and skills
- Loss of experienced skilled professionals (migration to other wealthy countries)
- Lack of socio-economic resources
- Increasing dependence on rain water catchments
- Increasing levels of unemployment and under-employment due to lack of new income generation avenues and limited diversification opportunities
- Growing dependence on imported consumable goods to meet domestic needs
- Out-migration for a long period of time seeking jobs and leaving families behind in islands
- Increasing criminal activities and drug use
- Loss of social cohesion and cultural values and practices

Sources: Adopted from (G. S. Bernard, 2007; Briguglio, 2003; Campbell, 2003; Hay, et al., 2004; Springer, Gibbons, & Paeniu, 2002; UNDP, 2002).

An expert group that worked for the United Nations concluded that “as a group, small island developing states are more vulnerable than other groups of developing countries” (SIDS, 2003, p. 55). After examining 111 countries comprising 37 small

states and 74 large states, the Joint Commonwealth Secretariat and the World Bank Taskforce on Small States list the most vulnerable countries of the world. The countries were ranked using a composite vulnerability index (Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States, 2000) (See Table 1.2).

However, the rankings differed when an output volatility index was applied. Of the 25 most vulnerable countries in the world, 24 are small states, and of these small states, at least 17 are Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States, 2000, p. 12; SIDS, 2003, p. 70, 2004, p. I). Of these 17 SIDS, five are Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Table 1.2: The Commonwealth Composite Vulnerability Index and other indices ordered according to vulnerability score for the 25 most vulnerable developing countries

	Population (000)	Real per capita GDP (US\$)	Rank	Output Volatility Index	Rank	Composite Vulnerability Index	Rank
Vanuatu	161	2,500	53	3.61	90	13.295	1
Antigua and Barbuda	65	5,369	86	13.38	3	11.246	2
Tonga	93	3,740	73	13.18	4	10.439	3
Bahamas	268	16,180	110	7.37	25	10.433	4
Botswana	1,401	5,220	85	10.21	12	10.158	5
Swaziland	809	2,940	58	11.17	10	9.633	6
Gambia	1,042	1,190	27	7.67	22	9.331	7
Fiji	758	5,530	89	6.84	32	8.888	8
Maldives	236	2,200	47	2.97	97	8.654	9
Singapore	2,821	19,350	111	3.35	94	8.651	10
Solomon Island	354	2,266	49	11.21	9	8.398	11
Dominica	71	3,810	76	6.12	41	8.122	12
Guyana	816	2,140	45	11.87	5	7.953	13
Djibouti	557	775	14	11.6	6	7.932	14
Grenada	92	3,118	61	6.89	31	7.848	15
Bahrain	535	15,500	109	5.22	61	7.748	16
Sao Tome	127	600	4	4.23	79	7.690	17
Jamaica	2,411	3,180	63	3.43	91	7.484	18
St Lucia	139	3,795	74	6.59	35	7.449	19
Samoa	167	3,000	59	6.92	30	7.371	20
Equatorial Guinea	379	1,800	39	11.26	8	7.029	21
Malta	361	11,570	106	2.36	107	6.857	22
Belize	204	4,610	82	9.63	15	6.652	23
St Vincent	11	3,552	69	6.08	43	6.563	24
Libya	5,048	6,125	94	6.05	46	6.536	25

Source: Small States: A Composite Vulnerability Index, The Commonwealth Vulnerability Index 2000. Note: 17 SIDS are shaded in gray and of these five LDCs are shaded in green

Most of the SIDS identified in the Commonwealth study as the world's most vulnerable countries fall under the category of archipelagos. In addition, of the 17 SIDS given in the table, the five LDCs, Vanuatu, Maldives, Solomon Islands, Sao Tome and Samoa, are archipelagic states. As can be seen from Figure 1.1, more than half of the 25 most vulnerable countries in the world are Small Island Developing States.

About 68 percent of the most disaster-prone countries in the world are Small Island Developing states. Nearly twenty percent of these SIDS are the least developed countries, which is a significant proportion (See Figure.1.1), whereas only four percent of large countries are identified as most disaster-prone in the study. Therefore, there is a particular need to focus development on small island developing states and put forward strategies to reduce their vulnerability.

SIDS are overwhelmed with ecological and geographical challenges (see Boxes 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3). They also face challenges in the development processes and require more investments. In particular, archipelagos are recognised as the most vulnerable due to some of their inherent 'interlocking' challenges, such as insularity, remoteness, isolation and fragmentation (Armstrong & Read, 2004; Overton & Thaman, 1999). SIDS also suffer from numbers of natural environmental hazards such as tropical cyclones and hurricanes, land slides, droughts, volcanic eruptions,

earthquakes and tsunamis (Briguglio, 2003, p. 7; Caribbean Development Bank, 2000, p. 7; Herrmann, et al., 2004, p. 1; Howorth, 2002, p. 6; Overton & Thaman, 1999, p. 27; SIDS, 2003, p. 70; SOPAC, 2002, p. 7; UNDP, 2002, p. 24; Witter, et al., 2002, p. 8). These interactive and interlocking factors render SIDS economies enormously fragile because the adverse impact of natural disasters on an island economy normally lead to high costs per unit lost and damages due to the small size of the states and magnitude of disaster (Witter, et al., 2002, p. 8). While SIDS face great challenges in economic and environmental vulnerability, they also have numbers of socio-political problems interconnected with their inherent nature and characteristics: smallness; geographical dispersion or fragmentation of the population of the island states. It is worse when they are archipelagos, because large numbers of small islands which are scattered over wide areas of ocean bring various socio-economic problems as well as political.

Small communities tend to generate small-scale economies and limited produce markets yet provision and accessibility to services, such as education, health, transportation and communication, are enormously expensive compared to mainland communities due to high costs per unit required to service each island community. Governance is not an easy task in the SIDS for the same reasons. Consequently, increased vulnerability in these island states has caused them to lag behind in their development, and some are ranked among the UN's 'least developing countries'. Developing island states are exposed to vulnerability by their nature and increased vulnerability in these states is very much associated with governance.

At the outset, it is also important to highlight the critiques of this conventional vulnerability literature as being 'pessimistic' and negative for the residents of the islands. Some critiques argue that the literature labels small island communities as vulnerable, dependent and incapable of addressing their own socio-economic and environmental problems because of the location and inherited natural characteristics of their physical surroundings, such as islandness, smallness, scarcity of resources, isolation from economic centres (Campbell, 2003; Hau'ofa, 1993). Hau'ofa (1993) calls it "belittling" and displaying ignorance of the positive aspects and beauty of the island communities by their own and outside social scientists and economists.

Campbell considers this labelling as “naturalising” the island communities because of the nature of their surroundings, based on the connotations of vulnerability, ranging from “weak and powerless to fragile, small and peripheral” (Campbell, 2003, p. 97). The implications of these critiques are that such depictions of the islanders as vulnerable may increase dependency on external aid and make the community feel more hopeless about resolving their problems.

Having acknowledged some of these critiques and the positive aspects of the island communities, it is also important to bear in mind the negative aspects of the islanders so that we can address “the very real challenges” of these communities (Thaman, 1993, p. 45). In fact, while it is important to promote the richness, complex cultures, and happy livings of these communities, it is also vital “to be aware of the limitations within which we need to perform” in order to address their needs (Veitayaki, 1993, p. 121). This may also be, at least, “a weapon and source of strength” in order to pronounce their “views and interests” not just “for entrepreneurial gain” (Ratuva, 1993, p. 95). This way, the island communities might be able to address their socio-economic and vulnerability issues in order to go forward within today’s extensively globalised world.

Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that, despite all the challenges and problems SIDS are facing, some, such as Singapore, the Bahamas, Barbados and Mauritius (see the Table 1.1), have made tremendous improvement and economic growth. They are ranked among the countries with High Human Development (UNDP, 2007)³. This gives a positive and optimistic message to other small island nations that, if governments are committed to work for their betterment and prosperity, then small island nations can break through the hurdles and challenges. In fact, there are also some other Non-UN member countries, such as British Virgin Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas and Netherlands Antilles that have high per capita income with a high *Human Development Index*. Although they have a high per capita income, the Non-UN member countries cannot be included in this category for several reasons. Firstly, they are not fully independent from their

³ The *Human Development Report 2007/2008* (UNDP, 2007) ranked Singapore 25, the Bahamas 49, Barbados 31 and Mauritius 65.

colonial authorities from which, presumably, they are entitled to receive a number of provisions. Secondly, most of them are provided with an annual budget by their associated countries.

1.3 Conceptual framework

Vulnerability of geographically dispersed and isolated communities in archipelagic states can be addressed when people are empowered by promoting their socio-economic, cultural, environmental and political well-being. To achieve their own well-being, people should be able to solve their problems and expand their socio-economic capabilities through participation, negotiation, influence, and by controlling and holding accountable state governance. It is argued that resilience and capacity to cope with vulnerability can be built by empowering socio-economically marginalised and geographically dispersed communities through increasing ‘capabilities’ in terms of education, health, and other services. The thesis, therefore, advocates an integrated development approach, ‘empowerment’, ‘capability’, and ‘community participation’, while promoting a people-centred system with good governance principles.

Socio-economic, environmental and political vulnerabilities are inevitable problems for all nations regardless of their size and the nature. However, the magnitude of their risks may vary based on the size, geographical nature and the capacity for the survival of the nation. The same scale of disaster and threat may have a larger impact on a small state than on a large country, and even more so for a small island developing state. Sometimes certain inherent features and characteristics make countries weak and prone to threats and disasters or strong in resisting and withstanding. As has been acknowledged by most of the international organisations, ‘small states’ are more at risk than ‘big states’ (Commonwealth, 1997a, p. 13) because of their size, geographical nature and resistance capacity.

Similarly, it also has been argued that, in some cases, a high level of poverty is not merely a shortage of capital but the existence of inappropriate and ineffective governance (Duncan & Toatu, 2004, p. 2). By the same token, vulnerability is not

solely caused by inherent aspects of a country but by ineffective governance. Inappropriate policies and strategies may have similarly played a significant role in increased vulnerabilities. Experience shows that vulnerability and bad governance are not confined to small states or small island states; in fact all countries are vulnerable to natural hazards and can face problems of inadequate governing systems, such as happened in the South-eastern Coast of the US from Hurricane Katrina of 2005. The experience of the Asian tsunami, in 2004, which hit several countries, large and small, like India and the Maldives, respectively, also demonstrates the effects of poor governance mechanisms in the event of a natural disaster.

Sometimes human-induced disasters and poorly managed systems cause more socio-economic and environmental risks than natural disasters. Berkes and Folke (1998, pp. 17-18) argue that "... environmental crises are often not so much caused by natural events as by political or socio-economic circumstances, including inappropriate government policies, distorted economic structures and poor resource management". We have seen that while a natural disaster, on the one hand, damages the condition of the people and the environment, on the other hand the nature of the applied government system can either escalate or ameliorate the catastrophe. It shows that governance can play a significant role in vulnerability reduction. 'Governance' and 'vulnerability', therefore, have become two major critical elements in the contemporary development discourse.

As previously discussed, the small developing archipelagic states, unlike their continental counterparts, tend to be more prone to environmental and socio-economic vulnerabilities because of their size and geography. These vulnerabilities, regardless of their definitions and types, have an adverse impact on the states' development in all aspects, especially, their socio-economy and well-being of the people. This occurs at all levels, macro and micro, national and local. Mainly, the concern of this thesis remains at the micro level, the geographically dispersed communities of the atolls in the Maldives. Tackling the vulnerabilities of a geographically fragmented population is equally as challenging a task as managing these fragmented communities through an effective and efficient system. The thesis, therefore, argues that the type of

governance can either reduce or increase vulnerability of these geographically fragmented communities and both governance and vulnerability should be treated as coexisting phenomena and addressed concurrently. Vulnerability cannot be tackled in the absence of a people-centred good governance system. The thesis also argues that measures taken as policies and programmes to address the vulnerability of these communities cannot be successful unless the system of governance embraces them and creates pathways for their achievement.

In its arguments, the thesis aims to place people and their well-being as the cornerstone of the study, bringing development concepts such as ‘empowerment’, ‘capability’ and ‘community participation’ into the discussion. The thesis, therefore, seeks evidence from the perceptions of locals of these states. Indeed, a well established people-centred system should consider socio-cultural and environmental values and experiences together with contemporary inventive approaches in addressing its people’s well-being.

Chambers defines well-being “as the experience of good quality of life” (Chambers, 2003, p. xvi). It is very obvious that human-beings, regardless of caste, class, culture, sex and colour, all are struggling for a quality life but the ‘quality’ may depend on affordability based on their capabilities and achievements. Well-being, therefore, can be defined differently for different persons in different countries; for some it may be the “person’s achievement: how ‘well’ is his or her ‘being’?” for others it can be seen as the person’s command over commodity control or richness (A. Sen, 1987, pp. 3, 16). Without dwelling on either of these two meanings of well-being – leaving it to be defined by people according to their own perspectives – this thesis argues that neither one can be achieved if systems are not able to create opportunities to achieve people’s well-being or fulfil their interests. Opportunities can be reaped when systems are readily committed to empowering individuals and communities with ‘basic capabilities’ as Sen conceptualises it: “a person being able to do certain basic things” (e.g. able to meet one’s nutritional, clothing and shelter requirements, and to participate in the social life of the community) (A. Sen, 1979, p. 218), in order to achieve well-being. In addition, the judgement on the level of achievement or command over commodity control may vary from person to person; but one should

not degrade the level of achievement beyond 'basic needs' as the least opportunities for one's survival.

In a broad sense, empowerment can be referred to as building up the capacity of an individual, group and community by enabling citizens to act to solve their problems and creating opportunities in order to achieve their own well-being. Capacity building should entail enhancing choice and action through various means such as education and changing the functions of power relations in a society. Alsop et al (2006, p. 1) describe empowerment as "the process of enhancing an individual's or group's capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes". The World Bank (2002a, p. vi) came up with an institutional definition of empowerment in the context of poverty reduction in its *Empowerment Resource-Book* and defines as it is "the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives".

Since the World Bank's focus is to create empowerment through institutional reform it has identified four elements of empowerment which interconnect with fundamental elements of governance. They are summarised as: 1) access to information; referring to information that will enable people to make use of opportunities, 2) inclusion or participation; describing how locals' participation will help to address the issues based on local knowledge and people's needs, 3) accountability; meaning that people who are answerable for policies and actions, including all actors of the state governance, should enhance governance to bring about social cohesion and justice, and 4) local organisation capacity; referring to the ability of local systems, including civil society and people, to work for common interests (World Bank, 2002a, pp. vi-vii).

The World Bank's elements correspond to Chambers' (2005, p. 66) six power-and-relationship words: partnership, empowerment, ownership, participation, accountability and transparency. According to Chambers, people can be empowered using a bottom-up approach, enhancing local systems through devolution of power to what he called people-empowering procedures (Chambers, 2005, p. 66). However,

Chamber (2005, p. 64) stresses that the challenge is how to use “procedures and rules to reverse and balance relationships of power, with decentralised and democratic diversity”. In the same vein Gita Sen (1997, p. 2) and Mikkelsen (2005, p. 346) see empowerment as the expansion of people’s ability to make choices over their own lives by changing power relations in favour of those who have less power and or no choice. This cannot be achieved in a local context, especially, within geographically isolated communities like archipelagos, without involving communities and individuals in policy formulation and decision-making. This can be clearly seen from the definition of community participation: “a wide range of ways local people are involved in external development interventions, from token and passive involvement to more empowerment-oriented forms of local decision-making” (Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 346). Nevertheless, empowerment goes beyond the classical meaning of power (Schneider, 1999, p. 13). Empowerment refers here to all necessary means and ways of building the capacity of geographically isolated communities, who are the most deprived in archipelagic states, in order to reduce their vulnerability (Schneider, 1999, p. 13). Community empowerment can be called ‘empowered participatory governance’ or ‘interactive governance’. In other words, community empowerment and participatory governance can be described as the principal philosophy of local democracy.

Based on the most commonly discussed elements of good governance – accountability, participation, predictability and transparency – this thesis argues that the effectiveness of any system in reducing vulnerability and maintaining the well-being of a people can properly be measured by incorporating and following development frameworks such as community participation, empowerment and capability approaches. The interrelated contextual frameworks of these development approaches cover the fundamental elements of governance. In addition these approaches have the potential to develop capacity within individuals and communities in order to reduce their vulnerabilities. It is argued, therefore, that the lack of fundamental elements of governance within existing systems means the absence of basic frameworks for these development approaches and vice versa. This is the reason why the literature stresses that the lack of these fundamental governance elements causes and increases poverty. The same can be argued with vulnerability.

Thus, the interactions and the themes used in the field are based on the guiding principles of the above stated development approaches and the same are applied as the basis for analysis of the data.

This thesis employs a qualitative ethnographic research approach involving multiple case studies to understand the phenomenon of increasing vulnerability in small island archipelagic states and its correlations with governance through people's perceptions and experiences. People's perceptions and their experiences are mainly obtained through participatory interactions. The comparative multiple case study approach to the Maldives, Vanuatu and New Zealand is used to explore the phenomena in-depth and identify commonalities. A comparative case study approach also provides an opportunity to find out some of the possible practices and policies and then learn from successes and failures.

1.4 Rationale for the selection of the topic and its coverage

My reason for selecting this research topic is influenced by several factors: long-held interest in the subject matter, the value I place on the need to understand the social problems associated with vulnerability, and my personal experience and knowledge or "deep familiarity" with the subject area (Berg, 1998, p. 126). I was born and raised on one of these small archipelagic states, the Maldives, which is prone to natural hazards and human-made disasters. I have worked for over five years in these remote vulnerable communities to improve living standards through various development means including training and empowering through awareness action programmes. I also experienced the devastating Asian tsunami in 2004 and worked very closely with some of the most affected people. As someone who has explored and experienced the vulnerabilities of a small island country and the outer island communities for a period of time, I know that these communities remain vulnerable to internal and external shocks. Certainly, efforts have been made at all levels to bring beneficial changes; hence one cannot deny that improvements have been achieved in all aspects of life. Education, health and other basic services are better than ever before. As a result, people are more educated and live more healthy lives. However, while the living standards of the outer islanders have changed, the cost of living has also boomed and islanders are still struggling for survival. Disparities

between islands and households on the islands are widening and vulnerability is increasing. A number of factors contribute to the widening disparities and increasing vulnerability in the Maldives, as have been outlined in the preliminary observations:

- The population is small and dispersed;
- Limited land and resources place a cap on development;
- Resources are scarce and there are few opportunities to diversify earnings;
- There are low employment opportunities;
- Proper socio-economic services and utilities are not available on the atolls;
- Products from outer islands are disadvantaged by lack of easy access to markets and high transport costs;
- There is a high unit cost for provision of services which makes them too expensive for most people;
- The majority of outer islanders have to spend a disproportionately high proportion of their limited income on secondary health care and education services;
- Outer islands are vulnerable in terms of access to (including access to islands, loading and unloading) foods and other consumable items, and
- Attempts to deliver services by a centrally controlled and managed system have not always worked.

Many of these conditions apply to all developing archipelagic states and their remote communities and need to be addressed systemically. However, because of their distinctive socio-economic and environmental characteristics it is not very helpful to make broad generalisations about the relationship between governance and vulnerability in small island developing states. Therefore, focused research is required to address specific development problems associated with governance and

vulnerability. The thesis will, therefore, attempt to find some practical remedies from current national and international practices to reduce vulnerability.

The literature review revealed that small island developing states are more vulnerable and exposed than other groups of countries. In fact, without an inclusive, cohesive and people-centred system of governance, states with small areas of land and dispersed and isolated communities are likely to have problems, such as administrative issues and socio-economic constraints, and be more likely to experience natural and man-made disasters. Moreover, they may be more vulnerable to internal security and external shocks. Therefore, the objectives of the study and research questions are as follows:

1.4 Research goal and objectives

The overall goal of the research is as follows:

To identify governance issues which impede the introduction of beneficial changes and recommend policies and systems for reducing vulnerability.

In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives are considered:

- To identify the greatest threats to remote communities and determine how their vulnerability differs from people living in urban areas;
- To study core areas of vulnerability in the economic, environmental, and cultural arenas of small archipelagic states and find out what possible ‘best practices’ can be applied;
- To analyse how effective current governance arrangements and structures are at reducing vulnerability and assess how effectively they contribute to the socio-economic development and enhance the wellbeing of the people, and
- To assess whether there are shortfalls in current efforts to address aspects of vulnerability and what can be done to reduce the risks involved.

1.5 Contribution

The concepts of ‘governance’ and ‘vulnerability’ are dealt with in the existing literature, by and large, as two separate entities, although the second cannot be addressed in isolation from the first. The thesis, therefore, argues that both governance and vulnerability should be treated as interconnected phenomena and bringing them together will enhance their significance. Vulnerability, regardless of type, can best be addressed if governance is treated as a closely related phenomenon. In particular, the study asserts that the vulnerability of geographically fragmented communities in archipelagic states is associated with governance and can be reduced when both issues are addressed concurrently and inclusively. The thesis presents evidence for its conceptual arguments from the local communities of these archipelagos, while looking for practical remedies from national and international practices which might assist in addressing socio-economic and environmental vulnerability as well as contribute to the body of knowledge about managing hazards and natural disasters.

Elements of this research may impact on policy making in response to economic, social, cultural and natural hazards, reducing vulnerabilities and empowering communities. Furthermore, the findings will contribute to international organisations working for, and investing in, the development of these states. The thesis also aims to provide a guideline for development campaigners and activists who are involved in development planning and management for these fragmented communities in archipelagic states. Finally, it aims to provide insights which may be applied on the researcher’s return to work in the area of development programmes and further research in the subject area.

1.6 Research questions

The study argues that the increased vulnerability among the communities of archipelagos, regardless of the type, is not merely because of their natural surroundings but also the extent to which vulnerability is associated with

governance. The overall goal and objectives of the thesis are pursued by investigating a number of questions.

The major research question for this project addresses the phenomenon of the increasing vulnerability of small island archipelagic states and asks: ***What are the gaps in governance in Small Island Developing Archipelagic States and how do they contribute to increasing vulnerability?***

This major question will be addressed by asking the following:

- What are the most vulnerable areas in small island states?
- What are the socio-economic and political causes of vulnerability in these states?
- How does governance impact on socio-economic and environmental vulnerability?
- How effectively is 'governance' institutionalised to reduce vulnerability and is how important is it to the socio-economic development of the country and well being of the people?
- What are the critical differences between the livelihoods of remote communities and their well-being and that of communities at the centre or closer to the centre?
- How are 'good governance' and 'vulnerability' understood by rural communities exposed to risk in small developing archipelagic states?
- What is understood by the term 'development' in the remote island communities of developing archipelagic states?
- What roles can civil society play for the cause of good governance and to reduce the vulnerability of the state and individuals?
- What are 'best practices' of local governance in a developed country which could be applied as 'remedies' to reduce vulnerability in small archipelagic states?
- What is lacking in these countries and what could be remedied in order to enable them to overcome such problems?

- What ‘best practices’ could be applied as ‘remedies’ to reduce vulnerability in small island states?

The majority of these questions are mainly addressed in chapters 4, 5, and 6, though they are discussed throughout the thesis. Chapters, 6, 7 and 8 focuses on the last three questions.

1.7 Plan of the thesis

This chapter has provided ‘*An Overview of the Study*’ and described the distinctive features and characteristics of SIDS and archipelagic states. Following this, the chapter introduced the research topic with meanings and definitions of the terms, including the intended coverage and its significance. The chapter also has discussed why governance and vulnerability are a concern for the SIDS and archipelagos, touched upon factors causing socio-economic and environmental vulnerability in small island states and outlined the research argument. The chapter has further detailed the conceptual framework, and then provided the overall goal, objectives and research questions.

In chapter two, *Research Approach*, the research approach is discussed including the research methods and methodologies. The chapter explains the reason for adopting a qualitative research with numbers of methods, secondary data collection, informal semi-structured interviews, open-ended discussions, informal conversational interviews and direct observations. The chapter also outlines the case studies and articulates why a multiple case study was selected and provides rationale for selecting the Maldives, Vanuatu and New Zealand with a focus on Bay of the Plenty. It then discusses the data analysis approach, research limitations and significance and ethical issues.

Chapter three, *Governance and Vulnerability in Development Context*, documents a historical background of governance and vulnerability in the development context through a literature review. The chapter discusses the indices of governance and vulnerability and governance models. The chapter also describes the linkages of these two phenomena, governance and vulnerability, with development, explaining

the role of civil society within a good governance system in order to make the system responsible, effective and efficient.

Chapter four, *Vulnerability in the Context of the Maldives: the Role of Governance in Reducing Vulnerability*, opens with a brief geographical and historical profile of the country. The chapter describes governance and vulnerability of the Maldives in its development context which presents institutional arrangements, socio-economic conditions, physical infrastructure, and involvement of the civil society in addressing vulnerability related problems. It also describes some of the policy measures taken in order to enhance the governance system and reduce vulnerability and poverty of the archipelagos' island and village communities and discusses the issues of disparities between urban and rural communities. The discussions in this chapter are based on secondary data with the support of the fieldwork data.

Chapter five, *Vulnerability in the Context of Vanuatu: the Role of Governance in Reducing Vulnerability*, presents geographical and historical background of the Vanuatu and discusses on similar themes as in chapter four. Chapters four and five are thematically identical with slight variations though contextually the two have significant differences.

Chapter six, *Governance and Vulnerability in the Maldives and Vanuatu through People's Perception: a Comparative Analysis*, continues the analysis of the findings of the fieldwork data from the Maldives and Vanuatu. This chapter attempts to understand the daily life of people, role and importance of governance, socio-economic and environmental vulnerability, poverty and development through people's perceptions. It analyses how the terms governance, vulnerability, development and civil society are understood by rural communities in these two countries. It also identifies some of the required changes in order address vulnerability-related problems in these communities. The chapter concludes with a comparative analysis of the two countries, the Maldives and Vanuatu, based on the discussions in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Chapter seven, *Governance, Policy Models and Best Practice: Local Community Empowerment in New Zealand*, identifies policy models and practices within the New Zealand system, especially focusing on regional and local systems. The chapter has four major sections. The first section gives a brief of the system of governance in New Zealand, the second section discusses local government system and third section provides some policy models and practices. The chapter is not aimed at a cross national comparison; rather it seeks policy models and best practices. For this particular reason the chapter brings some pragmatic evidence from the Bay of Plenty Region.

Finally, Chapter eight, *Governance Matters: Vulnerability Reduction in Fragmented Island Communities*, recapitulates major findings of the research discussed in previous chapters. Four major problematic areas are identified as key issues; lack of strong local governance system; absence of a reliable and outreaching mechanism for emergency management; scarcity of resources and smallness of population; and inadequate infrastructures that need to be addressed in order to reduce socio-economic and environmental vulnerability in archipelagic states. Based on the findings, some possible models are proposed to address these problematic issues (local government and good governance and disaster management) and some recommendations for each model to make them more effective. The chapter also discussed socio-economic aspects which are keys to empower the island communities. Finally, the chapter closes with points warning against some bad practices of governance and a reminder to consider the socio-cultural aspects of the country when designing a system or policy.

Chapter 2

Research Approach

2.1 Introduction

In the first chapter, the focus of the study was outlined and, in this chapter, the research approach adopted in the study is presented. The research entailed carrying out a comparative study by examining the governing systems, structures, institutions and mechanisms of the Maldives, Vanuatu and New Zealand. The Vanuatu case study was used to understand the problems through a broader dimension of archipelagic states. The local government model of New Zealand with a focus on Bay of Plenty Region was studied in order to seek policy models and best practices. However, the socio-economic and environmental vulnerability of the Maldives and its people, especially the most remote and vulnerable outer island communities of the archipelago, was the main focus of my study.

The study also examined the measures taken by governments, such as the policies and projects aimed to reduce the vulnerabilities of the people and their effectiveness in achieving their aimed targets. Therefore, the utmost effort was made to undertake a close observation of the situation of remote or rural communities in two of these states, the Republic of the Maldives and Vanuatu. The findings and observed practical evidence from these two states are intended to be compared with policy models and best practices from ‘developed nations’. The Bay of Plenty region in New Zealand, therefore, was taken as a case from a developed country for comparison and, by and large, its governing system, structures, institutions, mechanisms and policies were studied for possible model policies and practices. This chapter outlines how this proposed study was carried out, the methodologies, methods and approaches used to collect data, and how and why the case studies and informants were selected. The chapter also describes the analytical approaches and identifies their limitations and significance.

2.2 Research method

The grounding for this study is people's perceptions, and how they see the world from their experiences. The study aimed to identify the views of people concerning practical measures to reduce their vulnerability. Whereas literature, country reports and documents on international practice were used to bring theoretical and practical aspects, the primary data were mainly based on people's perceptions. Both qualitative and quantitative researchers are concerned with people's perceptions, but it is argued that the qualitative approach gets closer to the people's perspectives through detailed interviewing and observation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 12). Silverman (2005, p. 10) agrees that qualitative methods can provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena.

Most often, qualitative research concerns people and the nature of life (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003, p. 57). As Taylor and Bogdan (1998) assert, qualitative methods allow the researcher to know the people in person, experience their daily struggles, and explore their own definitions and concepts about the world life. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 4) explain that qualitative researchers use "a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand". Qualitative methodology was, therefore, employed in this study, using secondary data collection, informal semi-structured interviews, open-ended discussions, informal conversational interviews with potential informants (individuals, small and large groups), and direct observations.

However, it is believed that both "qualitative and quantitative methods are not simply different ways of doing the same thing" but each of these methods has its own "strengths and logics" and is "often best used to address different questions and purposes" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 17). Although the qualitative style of research dominates in development studies, in the best development research both quantitative and qualitative styles are combined (Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 141). It is, therefore, believed that quantitative techniques are not less important in development studies research for the analytical description of conditions and policy analysis, and can be powerful tools (Overton & van Diermen, 2003, p. 37). Hence, the qualitative research was supplemented and supported by quantitative secondary data in this

study. Existing academic literature, policy papers, and official documents and materials, statistics, and case studies on the subject related areas were collected and largely used in the thesis.

2.3 Data collection

Qualitative research can be carried out through “an intense or prolonged contact with a ‘field’ or ‘life situation’” (Punch, 1998, pp. 6-7). In this study, though, data collection fieldwork was conducted intensively, using a “snapshot” approach, adopting a “cross-sectional study” due to the limited time and resources available (Gray, 2004, p. 31). I have to acknowledge at the outset that the duration spent in the field varied depending on the time, circumstances and funding available to conduct the field research. I spent much longer in the Maldives, nearly six months, and, comparatively, a much shorter time in the other two fields, three weeks in Vanuatu and one week in the Bay of Plenty. Consequently, there was a variance in the data collected from the fields but this was supplemented by an extensive literature research. In fact, there is an enormous gap and variance in the literature, studies carried out and availability of secondary resources among these three countries. Comparatively, the Maldives has the least literature and secondary resources on the subject area, which required more in depth fieldwork and data from the field. Although I spent nearly six months in the Maldives, it should be acknowledged here that the fieldwork in the Maldives was not carried out in one stretch but was completed with intervals, because of the Maldives’ geographic nature and availability of transportation and as personal circumstances allowed.

In contrast to the Maldives, a considerable amount of research has been carried out at the regional level in Vanuatu by different organisations such as by SOPAC and USP, the results of which are easily accessible. Information on local governance and policies of the Bay of Plenty Region of New Zealand can also be readily accessed through various means, online information from regional and district councils, local government websites and government departments in Wellington. To understand the field themes and the phenomena, which was the main objective of the fieldwork I have applied, as Punch (1998, pp. 6-7) states, “a process of deep attentiveness”. However, as mentioned earlier, the primary focus of this study is the Maldives.

2.3.1 Selection of the case study sites

The research questions were explored through case study fieldwork in two developing archipelagic states, the republics of the Maldives and Vanuatu, from two different regions, South Asia and the South Pacific, respectively. The thesis also aimed to make a comparative analysis of findings and observe practical evidence from these two archipelagos with the proven pragmatic evidence from New Zealand, a developed nation, to a limited extent. The three states, the Maldives, Vanuatu and New Zealand were chosen for the following reasons:

The **Maldives** was chosen because:

- a) As stated in the personal position, it is my home country and principal focus of research and is, in fact, a small island developing state;
- b) It has small communities scattered over 200 inhabited islands;
- c) It is vulnerable to human-induced and natural disasters and the outer island communities are inherent to socio-economic and environmental vulnerability by nature;
- d) It is the fifth most vulnerable country in the world according to the Commonwealth Composite Vulnerability Index, 1997;
- e) Its population is less than one million and its land area is very small;
- f) its economy is considered as one of the fastest growing in South Asia, and
- g) It is a heavily centralised state which is, indeed, trying to reduce the existing disparities between the capital and outer islands through establishing growth centres.

Box 2.1: The Republic of Maldives

The Republic is located in the Indian Ocean, 600kms to the east of Sri Lanka and 670kms to the north of India, with an estimated land area of 298 km². The capital is Malé.

- Archipelago consists of 1,192 islands.
- Of these, 196 islands are inhabited.
- Total Population of the archipelago is 298,968.
- Of these, 195,275 people live on 195 scattered islands.
- Estimated GDP per capita income is US \$ 3,900.
- Fisheries and tourism are the two main economic industries.

Source: (CIA, n.d.; MPND, 2004a, 2007b, 2007e; UN-OHRLLS, n.d.; UNDP, 2007).

Vanuatu was selected because:

- a) It is also a small island developing country;
- b) It has small communities scattered over 66 inhabited islands;
- c) It is exposed to human-induced and natural disasters and the outer island communities are vulnerable by nature;
- d) It is the most vulnerable country in the world according to the Commonwealth Composite Vulnerability Index, 1997;
- e) Its population is less than one million and its land area is comparatively small;
- f) Its economy is growing, and
- g) It has been trying to employ a decentralised system over the past decades in order to overcome its problems.

Box 2.2: The Republic of Vanuatu

The Republic is located in the South Pacific Ocean, some 965kms of West Fiji and 3,701kms northeast of Sydney, with an estimated land area of 12,190 km². The capital is Port Vila of Efate island in Shefa Province.

- Archipelago consists of 83 islands.
- Of these, 63 islands are inhabited.
- Total Population of the archipelago is 209,920.
- Of these, 177,456 people live on over 61 scattered rural islands.
- Estimated GDP per capita income is US \$ 2,900.
- Agriculture and tourism are the two main economic industries.

Source: (CIA, n.d.; Mourgues, 2005; UN-OHRLLS, n.d.; UNDP, 2007; Vanuatu, 1987, 2000a, 2001, 2007a).

New Zealand was included because:

- a) It is a developed country, providing a part of comparison for policy models;
- b) It has similar vulnerability, e.g. large coastline, prone to tsunamis and earthquakes;
- c) The population is not very large though it exceeds one million, and
- d) The country has the 'Westminster system' and is assumed, by most, to be one of the most democratic countries and known for good governance.

Within New Zealand, the focus was placed on **Bay of Plenty region** for several reasons: firstly, the region is highly vulnerable to natural disasters and secondly the region is one of the fastest growing in New Zealand. The region has been working to

address its socio-economic and environmental problems through a development approach, by bringing about partnership policy models, such as “Smart Growth: Building Block to a Better Future”, a joint project between Environment Bay of Plenty, Tauranga District Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council and the Tangata Whenua, creating a Sub Region for a fifty year period.

It is obvious that there are similarities and dissimilarities in these selected case study sites, according to their geographical or ecological nature and other elements, such as, size, population, and socio-economic conditions. However, the principle objectives of this selection were simply: first to understand the phenomena, governance and vulnerability in archipelagic states and their inter-related phenomena; secondly, to find out some possible practices that can help to reduce the vulnerability of fragile communities in similar states. These were selected, as Vaughan states (Stake, 2005, pp. 445-446), “because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases”. The interest in these ‘multiple case studies or collective case studies’ was beyond instrumental, because I have a strong personal attachment with one of these field sites, the Maldives. Nonetheless, the thesis aimed to find out “what is common and what is particular about the cases” including the nature, historical background, physical settings, socio-economic and political structures (Stake, 2005, p. 446) of these cases.

2.3.1.1 Fieldwork within the case study countries

In order to fulfil the objectives of the study and answer the research questions, the thesis examines the governing systems, structures, institutions and mechanisms of the case study countries. The measures taken by the governments to address socio-economic and environmental vulnerability, such as the policies and projects, especially in relation to the most remote and vulnerable outer-island communities, are focused on in the study. The utmost effort has been, therefore, made to undertake a close observation of the situation of these fragile groups and seek out their perceptions of the real world. For this specific reason I tried to visit a number of outer island or village communities within the case study countries, the Maldives and Vanuatu, as, briefly, described below.

2.3.1.1.1 Fieldwork in the Maldives

I carried out the first of the proposed fieldwork studies in the Maldives from 17th November 2005 to 15th May 2006. This was two months longer than the intended period because of some foreseen and unforeseen reasons, including my father's illness and immobility and the very sudden illness of my father-in-law, who suffered a massive heart attack and went into a coma a month after arrival in the field. Despite these hindrances and difficulties, the fieldwork was carried out with interruptions.

First of all, I made some preliminary trips to 12 atolls and visited 24 inhabited islands and communities in these 12 trips. Throughout these trips I met about 16 tsunami affected individuals, members of 16 Island Development Committees (IDCs) and 12 Island Women's Development Committees (IWDCs), a number of atoll chiefs, senior atoll staff and island chiefs, members of NGOs and political parties at the atolls. Some of these trips were made through different activities in which I joined, sometimes as a resource person or main conductor of these activities, and sometimes just as an independent observer for my own research purpose. Some of these trips were made at my own expense and arrangement.

After having made preliminary trips and considering various pros and cons, I concluded to use Raa (see Box 2.3) and Shaviyani (see Box 2.4) atolls as the potential sites for in-depth fieldwork. They were chosen for several reasons:

1) Raa atoll

- a) The atoll is known as very remote and isolated;
- b) No development project has been implemented with the new development concepts, as in the other atolls;
- c) One of its islands, Kandholhudhoo, was the most affected by the Asian tsunami, on 26 December 2004, and its population has been displaced to other islands;
- d) This is one of the atolls in the country where a resettlement programme had been implemented and resettlement of the Kandholhudoo population is ongoing;

- e) Some of its islands (i.e. Kinolhas, Angolhitheemu, Rasgetheemu, and Fainu) are known for socio-economic and environmental vulnerability, and
- f) I was asked to give some technical support in terms of capacity building for the community and training in island development, through which some of my expenses would be covered and meetings could be organised for research purposes.

Box 2.3: Raa Atoll

It is an isolated atoll situated at the second northernmost region of the Maldives, some 170kms away from the national capital city, Malé.

- The atoll comprises 88 islands.
- Of these, 15 islands are inhabited.
- Total Population of the atoll is 15,483.
- Capital island of the atoll is Ungoofaaruu.
- Main sources of income are fisheries, carpentry and agriculture.

Source: (MoAD, 2004; MPND, 2007d, 2007e).

2) Shaviyani atoll

- a) The atoll is known for its development and sensitivity to some of the popular community development concepts and processes;
- b) A Government/UNDP funded development project, Atoll Development for Sustainable Livelihoods, has been very recently implemented. Through this project a community development mechanism has been introduced and an Atoll Development Fund has been established for community development;
- c) I am, personally, very familiar with the atoll for two reasons. Firstly, I had been involved in the UNDP funded development project and worked very closely with all the communities and, secondly, it is my home atoll;
- d) Some of its islands (i.e. Feevah, Foakaidhoo, Narudhoo, and Noomara) are known for socio-economic and environment vulnerability;
- e) This is one of the atolls in the country which has had an ongoing resettlement programme for a decade;
- d) Some of its islands are known to have been badly affected in the tsunami, and
- e) It is very close to Raa atoll. Therefore, it was easy and less costly to access the atoll.

Box 2.4: Shaviyani Atoll

It is an isolated atoll located in the first northernmost region of the Maldives, about 218kms distance from the national capital city, Malé.

- **The atoll comprises 50 islands.**
- **Of these, 14 islands are inhabited.**
- **Total Population of the atoll is 14,902.**
- **Capital island of the atoll is Funadhoo.**
- **Major sources of income are fisheries and agriculture.**

Source: (MoAD, 2004; MPND, 2007d, 2007e).

Of these two atolls, I made a visit to all 15 inhabited islands (see Appendix II for details) of Raa atoll and spent 3 days on each island involved in very intensive island development plan workshops organised by atoll and island committees. This allowed me to create a close relationship with all the elite members of the island communities, including Island Development Committees, Island Women's Development Committees, NGOs, headmasters, teachers, health officials, magistrates, youth clubs and individuals from other major sources of income and livelihoods. As a result, this enabled me and the participants to exchange knowledge, experience and very frank personal views and ideas on issues and themes covered in the fieldwork. I found that this was the very reason that some of the interviews and open ended discussions took more than an hour, which was more than I was expecting. Without creating this close relationship, it would have been very difficult for me to discuss sensitive issues such as governance, access to services and social vulnerability.

I visited three out of the 14 inhabited islands in Shaviyani atoll where I was based on one of these islands for six days and travelled to the other two islands for a day visit to each (see Appendix III for details). On these three islands meetings were held with island chiefs and then group meetings with members of two committees (Island Development and Women's Development Committees) and members of NGOs and Youth clubs. At the same time interviews were conducted with a few individuals.

Most of these trips were made by sea either using speed-boats or the very traditional, mechanised local boats. Of these, only five atolls, Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu, Laamu,

Thaa and Seenu, were accessed by air using domestic flights. I travelled once to Raa atoll by a sea-plane via a tourist resort. Sea-planes are used as the mode of the transportation to carry tourists to resorts and locals can travel if seats are available. There are two more atolls (Lhaviyani and Baa atolls in north central region of the Maldives) that I have not included in Appendix I at which I had stop-overs and the chance for observations and casual talk with some of their people. In Lhaviyani atoll, I had visits to Hinnavaru and Kurendhoo, and in Baa atoll, I visited Eydhafushi, the atoll capital island.

During my stay in the Maldives, I also benefited from the Island Councils' introductory sessions to the island communities and chiefs, by joining in some of these trips to the islands and attending the sessions, especially in the southernmost atolls. The political intention in introducing Island Councils is to replace the current Island Development Committees in order to improve local administration, by establishing strong local governing systems and delegating the administrative powers to the atolls as part of ongoing 'reform and enhancing democracy'. There were opportunities to visit four island level meetings in the southern atolls, namely Maradhoo, Maradhoofeydhoo, Meedhoo and Hulhudhoo. I also was invited to participate in the discussion meetings on the formation of Island Councils and articulation of the Councils' regulations.

I also was asked to help conduct an atoll level workshop in Faafu atoll, similar to the workshop that I conducted in Raa atoll, to build local capacity in development planning. Faafu atoll is one of the south-mid atolls and one of the smallest in the country. The atoll has only five inhabited islands with the population of 4,790. I took advantage of this offer as freely giving extra input for the fieldwork and joined with the team, for the week long workshop. There, I was able to meet and interview senior assistant atoll chiefs, island chiefs, members from the Island, Atoll and Women's Development Committees, NGOs, teachers, and health officials from its all inhabited islands who came to participate in the workshop. During this workshop I had four interviews and one group discussion with participants from different islands. This unexpected opportunity added extra input to the study as I was able to talk to and

interview people from five islands of the atoll as groups, on the themes used in the case study atolls.

In summary, in the Maldives, excluding preliminary visits, the researcher conducted 67 interviews and participated in 20 group discussions throughout the in-depth fieldwork in Raa and Shaviyani atolls, including interviews with officials from central government and non-government agencies in the capital, Malé.

2.3.1.1.2 Fieldwork in Vanuatu

This was the second of the three fieldwork visits in this study. The fieldtrip was postponed twice because of various reasons, including the death of my father-in-law, in July 2006, and delays in obtaining a research permit. This fieldwork was eventually carried out from 31st August – 28th September 2006. I spent three weeks in Vanuatu, mainly based in Port Vila and Tanna. I stayed in a guest house on Emalus Campus, the University of the South Pacific, in Port Vila, and in a local guest house in Tanna. The fieldwork in Vanuatu mainly covered two provinces, Shefa (see Box 2.5) and Tafea (see Box 2.6).

Box 2.5: Shefa Province

The province is the second southern province of the republic. The name, Shefa, is derived from the names of Shepherd and Efate islands. The Shefa Provincial Council's headquarters are located in Port Vila, *Efate*, which is the country's capital as well. Therefore, Shefa province has advantages of being closer to central resources.

- The province comprises 27 islands, The four main islands are Epi, Emae, Shepherds, and Efate.
- Total Population of the province is 68,706.
- Major economy is based on tourism, agriculture and fishing.

Source: (Bevan, 1990; Vanuatu, 1987, 2000a, 2001, 2007a; VNSO, 2007a, 2007d).

In Vanuatu, I visited two inhabited islands, a few villages and two resort islands. Of these, three days were spent on Tanna island, in Tafea province, but all other visits were a day trip or just a few hours, in Shefa province. During these visits and the stay in Port Vila, I conducted 58 interviews with officials from government and non-

government organisations, tribe communities, chiefs, individual farmers, fishermen, taxi and bus drivers, and university students. For the details see Appendix IV.

Box 2.6: Tafea Province

This is a geographically isolated province at the southernmost of the republic. The name, Tafea, is derived from its five main islands, Erromango, Aniwa, Tanna, Futuna and Anatom. The Tafea Provincial Council's administrative capital is Isangel, Tanna. The province is located some 200kms distance from Port Vila, the capital of the country.

- The province comprises five inhabited islands.
- Total Population of the province is 29,398.
- Major economy is based on tourism, agriculture and fishing.

Source: (Bevan, 1990; Vanuatu, 1987, 2000a, 2001, 2007a; VNSO, 2007a, 2007d).

In addition, I spent six days in Fiji on my travels both to and from Vanuatu and was able to visit *Levuka* and a few villages in the mainland. During my short stay in Fiji I had opportunities to meet some individuals, professors, university students and officials from NGOs. For the details see Appendix V.

2.3.1.1.3 Fieldwork in the Bay of Plenty region, New Zealand

This was the third of the three fieldworks proposed in the study. Unfortunately, I could not spend more than a week in the Bay of Plenty (BoP) due to ill-health (see Box 2.7 for a brief profile of the BoP). The fieldwork was carried out from 22nd November 2006 from Opotoki to Whakatane, including nine interviews with the Bay of Plenty regional officials and some of the Opotiki district officials and individuals.

As mentioned earlier, since the main objective of selecting the Bay of Plenty was to compare the institutional setup and policies with other two case studies, therefore, this very short field visit, supplemented by secondary data, was still valuable in understanding the real life and the nature of the region for the purpose of this study.

Box 2.7: The Bay of Plenty Region

The region is located on the East Coast of the North Island of New Zealand. The region covers an area of 21,836 km², comprising 12,253 km² of land and 9,583 km² of coastal marine area. The region also has some 18 offshore islands such as Mayor Island, Motiti Island, Whale Island and the active volcano of Whakaari or White Island. Whakatane is the headquarters for the Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

- The region has seven District Councils, Kawerau, Opotiki, Rotorua, Taupo, Western Bay of Plenty, Whakatane, and Tauranga District Councils.
- Total Population of the region is 257,379, which is about 6.4 percent of the national population and 5th largest among the 16 regions in New Zealand.
- Main economic industries are agriculture and tourism.

Source: (Environment B.O.P, 2008; Environment Bay of Plenty, 2006; Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

2.3.2 Sampling

This qualitative research is aimed at understanding the phenomena of governance and vulnerability and finding out some possible practices for the small island developing archipelagos based on people's perceptions. The study mainly focused on people's perceptions of their daily life, the socio-economic aspects of the people and the state, institutional structures and mechanisms of the state governance, and policies. The sampling, therefore, was required to cover a wide range of sources and means, including people, settings, events, process and policies (Maxwell, 1996, p. 69). 'Purposeful sampling' or 'criterion-based selection' was used in the fields as a strategy for sampling of informants, although, sometimes I had to resort to 'snowball sampling' and 'convenience sampling' strategies on various occasions. 'Purposeful sampling' or 'criterion-based selection' strategy was applied because, through this strategy, one can have deliberate selection of particular settings, persons or events, in a representative manner, to get the vital information required for the study (Gray, 2004, p. 88; Maxwell, 1996, p. 70). A 'Snowball sampling' approach allows the researcher to identify a small number of potential individuals, who will, eventually, identify other potential informants (Gray, 2004, p. 88). 'Snowball sampling' was very useful when I had problems identifying the right people for the interviews,

especially in Vanuatu and the Bay of Plenty, where I was a stranger. This particular strategy was employed on several occasions, mainly in these two fields. ‘Convenience sampling’, which is used “on the basis that they are conveniently available” (Gray, 2004, p. 88), was used only when I had no other choice because of resource and time constraints, especially in Vanuatu and the Bay of Plenty region.

Nonetheless, selections of key persons and groups for interviews and discussions were undertaken in a careful manner to avoid exclusion of any segments of the relevant organisations and island communities. I tried to include informants from a range of age groups, elderly, middle-aged and youngsters of both genders, including people from all sectors of livelihood of the visited communities. However, actual sampling approaches were determined by the particular conditions and circumstances of the field.

2.3.3 Methods of data collection

Methods of data collection were kept flexible so that they could be evolved and self-corrected to suit the circumstances in the field. An eclectic approach was used to cross-check the collected data and information (Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p. 6). The use of multiple sources of information, methods and techniques was sought, to validate the data and information using a triangulation process for their reliability (Cresswell, 2003, pp. 195-196; Tolich & Davidson, 1999, pp. 33-34). Mainly data and information were collected in a comparative manner to evaluate the case studies from the Republics of Maldives and Vanuatu. The New Zealand (Bay of the Plenty) case study was aimed at ‘policy models’ and ‘best practices’. Therefore, field data were sought based on these aspects. Five major methods, secondary data collection, informal semi-structured interviews, open-ended discussions, informal conversational interviews and direct observations, were used to collect data and information in the field.

2.3.3.1 Secondary data collection

One of the data gathering techniques in qualitative research is collecting and analysing textual materials (Bouma, 2000, p. 79). It is a crime, according to

Mikkelsen (2005, p. 87), to exclude secondary data from a development studies research. In this thesis, textual materials from several sources such as documentary sources (official and unofficial, multilateral and bilateral), literature (books and journals), and policies (policy documents, country reports, project reports and statistical data of the Maldives, Vanuatu and New Zealand) were used as secondary data. Most of the textual materials from the Bay of Plenty, New Zealand were derived from online databases. Research carried out in “development studies make frequent use of secondary in the form of statistics” (Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 88). Some of these textual materials such as the census data are quantitative and were substantially used in the thesis to supplement and support the qualitative findings. The discussions in chapters 4 and 5 are mainly based on the secondary data. As warned by some scholars (Bouma, 2000, p. 79), it was sometimes difficult gaining access to information in some departments of the governments and non-government organisations in the Maldives and Vanuatu for a number of reasons: firstly, either the responsible officers were not available or willing to disclose for some reasons; secondly, bureaucratic approval procedures were long and complex; thirdly, the census information was not well kept or organised.

2.3.3.2 Informal semi-structured interviews

One of the main objectives of the study was to bring people’s perceptions and their experiences to centre stage in order to better understand the phenomena of governance and vulnerability. The thesis argues that local problems can be best understood and dealt with through local knowledge. Interviews were, therefore, carried out with participants from government organisations, NGOs and community-based organisations, as well as with key persons from outer island communities. Informal interviewing is meant to establish a ‘great rapport’ in creating a comfortable atmosphere for interviewing which allows participants to speak freely with detailed responses (H. R. Bernard, 2000, p. 204). Semi-structured interviewing is believed to be one of the most effective techniques used in qualitative research, especially, in studying people’s knowledge, perceptions, experiences and feelings or attitudes (Gray, 2004, p. 214). It was also expected that semi-structured interviews would bring to the surface some unexpected issues (Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 89). As Fontana

and Frey (2005, p. 701) highlight, it is often the case that qualitative interviewing is conducted concurrently with participant observation.

The research involved ‘elite’ members of local communities and high-level government or non-government officials. Bernard (2000, p. 205) points out that semi-structured interviewing works very well with such projects. He further argues (H. R. Bernard, 2000) that semi-structured interviewing is well-suited for situations when the researcher has limited time and resources and there is little chance of meeting with participants again. A semi-structured interviewing method was employed to keep a ‘freewheeling quality’ to a great extent so I could lead the floor and at the same time maintain the direction, in order for the interview to cover the topics or fulfil the objective of the interview. A pre-planned interview guide (see Appendix VI), therefore, enabled me to focus areas of the study.

Nonetheless, I endeavoured to follow most of the suggested technical aspects of interviewing to maintain validity of information: firstly, applying proper interview techniques to establish a rapport or relationship of trust to create an open atmosphere so participants could speak freely and frankly; secondly, endorsing initial responses to encourage participants; and thirdly, giving enough time within reason in order to explore the subject in depth. As a result most of the interviews took longer than I had expected. Some lasted more than one hour because sometimes it was necessary to listen to a participant’s emotional grievances without interrupting. Indeed, most of those emotional grievances revealed untold facts about the field themes.

2.3.3.3 Open-ended discussions

In the outer islands of the Maldives and Vanuatu, open-ended discussions were aimed at focus groups from tribes, community based organisations and members of government and non-government organisations. This technique was basically used to learn and explore ‘public opinion’ on the issues related to the research (Bouma, 2000, p. 181). Sometimes, the practical application of this technique was not very different from informal interviewing, as Fontana and Frey (2005, p. 703) describe: “the group interview is essentially a qualitative data-gathering technique that relies

on the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting”. Though these sessions were open-ended, I tried to maintain the discussion within the main areas covered in the interviewing guide. Participants in most of these sessions were very dynamic, enthusiastic and cooperative.

2.3.3.4 Informal conversational interviews

This particular type of qualitative method is used to strengthen and validate data collected through other techniques. Sometimes this was used as a snowball approach to identify potential informants to be interviewed. It was a very helpful tool to uncover new topics or discuss very sensitive issues during my fieldwork. Although informal conversational interviewing is believed to be one of the most open-ended technique of interviewing (Gray, 2004, pp. 217-218), I still tried to follow the interview guide in order to focus on the fieldwork objectives. Most of the conversational interviews were with individuals and small groups of the local government officials, members of NGOs and community members at the atolls and villages in the Maldives, Vanuatu and the Bay of Plenty of New Zealand, although some were also conducted with the central government officials of the Maldives. Nonetheless, informal conversational interviewing was mainly used for the purposes of validity and triangulation, and sometimes for clarity of the data. As Maxwell (1996, p. 76) points out, “collecting data information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods” is known as the general principle for triangulation.

2.3.3.5 Direct observations

Observation was included in the methods of data collection because it provides an opportunity to investigate beyond what has been heard and told by people and read in textual materials and represents another source of evidence (Bouma, 2000, pp. 91-92; Gray, 2004, pp. 217-218). Direct observation helps the investigator to verify what we are ‘told and read’, particularly about conditions of people and effectiveness of policies. Bouma (Bouma, 2000, p. 92) further emphasises that “observational evidence is often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied”. In fact, I endeavoured to accurately perceive the world of the people and

policies, and their effectiveness. At the same time, it was also important to cross-check what had been observed in the field during the interviewing, open-ended discussions and informal conversational interviews.

2.4 Data analysis

Qualitative research involves a cyclic process of data analysis, data collection, data reduction, data organisation and data interpretation (Tolich & Davidson, 1999, pp. 8-9). Analysis of the data and information collected through informal semi-structured interviews, informal conversational interviews, open-ended discussions and direct observations was mainly undertaken manually, through tabulating in tables and graphs and narrating in the most appropriate way. Only the most relevant and directly engaged information from recorded interviews and group discussions based on the filed themes was transcribed, coded and analysed. Collected official statistics and other materials have also been analysed in the same manner. Some of the development approaches, such as community participation and empowerment, and the fundamental elements and ideologies of governance were applied as the bases for analysis of the data collected. The field themes and issues were categorised and discussed within contextual frameworks of these approaches and ideologies, in the belief that this would allow the vulnerability of the archipelagos to be addressed.

2.5 Limitations and significance

Everything has both anticipated and unexpected limitations and challenges. It was, therefore, anticipated that the proposed study, which involved fieldwork in three different countries, would likely pose foreseen and unforeseen limitations and challenges. Having acknowledged the certainties and uncertainties, it is worth noting that I experienced both kinds of challenges. Some uncertain challenges were the sudden illnesses of some of the important members of the family and me and the subsequent tragedy, such as the losses of my father-in-law and his mother – my grand mother-in-law. The other sudden event was my father's sickness and his gradual immobility, and the loss of my uncle, who was very dear to my father, leaving a saddened impact on him as the tragedy left him unspeaking and silent; I have never heard a word from him since then. I hope that I will accomplish my study

in his lifetime and have opportunities to serve him. Although this may not have direct count on the research but it has a direct impact on me as the researcher and my emotions, which have had a direct impact on this study and its pace.

I also experienced difficulties in getting required information for the research for several reasons; sometimes because of language barriers and unwillingness to disclose some vitally important data and information for the study. I also had difficulties in accessing the most vulnerable areas and the people because of the unavailability of proper or frequent transportation. Shortages of time and resources have been another constraint. Costs and access also had to be considered when the fields were selected. One of the major constraints was sufficient funds to cover three fieldwork studies in a similarly consistent manner with the same length of time spent in each. This proved impossible because my scholarship only covered home-based research with limited funds. Based on these constraints, shortage of time and funds, a 'snapshot' approach was used, a 'cross-sectional' study with an eclectic design of multiple strategies and methods (Gray, 2004, p. 32; Punch, 1998, p. 148). The idea behind the selection of three different fields, even with very limited resources, was to obtain a 'holistic overview' of the themes in the fields for a comparative study. While acknowledging the variances in numbers of interviews carried out, data collected, and time spent, including the approaches used in the fields, the objectives of the fieldwork have been achieved; information obtained from the fields was sufficient to understand the phenomena and undertake a comparative analysis.

There may be bias in my standpoints and perceptions, especially on social, cultural and political issues, because of a number of factors, my background in terms of knowledge, faith, cultural values and experience. I was born and grew up in a small isolated island where there was hardly any basic socio-economic infrastructure, especially schools or health facilities. Certainly, my past experience may occasion bias on socio-political issues as someone who was fortunate to have access to education only at the age of seven, by living hundreds of miles away from home and family. In addition, my professional knowledge and experience may also influence my stands on social, political and economic issues, as someone who has been working for the most deprived communities in the islands as a development

practitioner. However, as it has been scholarly recommended to both quantitative and qualitative researchers to maintain a “value neutral position” (Berg, 1998, p. 126), I tried to remain neutral throughout the research process.

One may argue that Vanuatu may be not the best country among Pacific nations for a comparative study with the Maldives, because other nations such as Kiribati and Tuvalu may have more similarities in terms of geography and ecology. In the same manner, New Zealand as a developed country may not be the most appropriate comparison for policy models and best practices. In particular, the Bay of Plenty Region as a focused area within New Zealand for the purpose of the thesis may not be the most suitable region. Nevertheless, these three representative areas for fieldwork were selected for this study, primarily due to costs and access, but, nevertheless, generated valuable comparisons.

2.6 Ethical issues

Research, both quantitative and qualitative, involving human subjects is required to consider a number of ethical issues, such as permissions from the participants in the research, institutions, and, sometimes, country where the field research is to be carried out (Bouma, 2000). The proposed field research included observations, interviews and open-ended discussions with individuals, groups and members of government and non-government organisations. Therefore, the research needed approval from the Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University of Wellington. The application to the Committee in order to undertake this research was approved in November 2005 (see Appendix VIII). It was also necessary to obtain research permission from the government of Vanuatu prior to the field research, which was arranged by the Ministry of Education in Vanuatu (see Appendix VII).

I prepared for both oral and written consent, though the intention was to opt for oral consent unless the participants asked to give written consent (see Appendix IX for participants’ consent form). Oral consent was preferable because formal consent in the form of signed statement might put the participants in an uncomfortable situation, making them reluctant to talk very openly, assuming that the signed form might be

given to someone else, putting the participant's life in trouble. Whenever oral approvals were sought, the research process and the person's rights were carefully explained before any interview or discussion was carried out (see Appendix X for informant sheet). I proceeded with the interview or discussion only if the oral consent was given, otherwise the session was cancelled.

In the first field site, the Maldives, I opted solely for oral consent. Therefore, the same option was carried forward in the other two fields, Vanuatu and the Bay of Plenty. During and after the research, I strictly followed the principles stated in the Human Ethics Application form and the general codes of ethics identified for qualitative research, such as obtaining informed consent, avoiding deception, protecting participants' privacy and confidentiality, and ensuring that data were collected and used accurately in the thesis (Christians, 2000). I took care to keep the informants confidential and anonymous. Names are not used in the thesis or even in direct quotes. I also have avoided referring to the name of a place if the person could easily be identified. Access to information and field data, including recorded interviews and field notes, has been restricted to me and my supervisors.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research approach of the study and the selection of case studies, methods and sampling used for data collection. It has also discussed the data analysis approach, limitations and significance of the study, and ethical issues. I undertook a qualitative multiple case studies approach in order to understand governance and socio-economic and environmental vulnerability in Small Island Developing States, with a particular focus on archipelagic states, like the Maldives and Vanuatu. It was believed that a qualitative and comparative multiple case studies approach would provide in-depth understanding of field themes and allows the researcher to see these social phenomena from the people's perceptions.

The next chapter, chapter three, will look at governance and vulnerability in a development context, arguing that good governance is a vital precondition to address issues of socio-economic and environmental vulnerability.

Chapter 3

Governance and Vulnerability in Development Context

3.1 Introduction

Governance, vulnerability, poverty, civil society and development are key concepts in development discourse, and governance has been identified as the ‘buzz word’ in the development literature (Chambers, 2006; Chambers & Conway, 1991; 2002; Kaufmann, Kraay, & Matruzzi, 2006; Kooiman & Bavinck, 2005; Larmour, 1996a; Leftwich, 1993; Ray, 1998; Turner & Hulme, 1997; Weiss, 2000; World Bank, 1992). In fact, one can argue that these concepts are the basis of development studies and related areas and they are the topics most often focused on by development agencies at national and international levels (ADB, 2005; Mellor & Jabes, 2004; UNDP, 2004, 2006; World Bank, 1992, 2002a, 2002b, 2007c). However, they are frequently linked, such as poverty reduction being linked with governance as a precondition (World Bank, 2000/2001) and civil society with good governance and democracy. However, although governance and vulnerability are discussed widely in the literature, they themselves are raised as separate issues, not as integrated phenomena. This is the gap that this thesis attempts to fill by arguing that governance is a precondition to reduce vulnerability. It is, therefore, important to be informed about the historical background of these two concepts within the development context. This is the main purpose of this chapter. The first section focuses on governance including its linkage with the concepts of development and civil society. The second section of the chapter concentrates on the concept of vulnerability, its interlocking relationship with poverty, and its linkage with development concepts and governance.

3.2 Governance: the concept, its uses and models

The concept of ‘governance’ and its associations existed in social science even before the term was introduced in the late 1980s and became widely known in the early 1990s (Kooiman & Bavinck, 2005, p. 14; O'Toole & Burdess, 2005, p. 24;

Weiss, 2000, p. 795). Weiss (2000, p. 795) argues that “the concept is as old as human history”. Jessop (1995, p. 308) finds evidence of the term ‘governance’ as early as in the 14th century when it referred “mainly to the action or manner of governing, guiding, or steering conduct”. He further expounds his historical discussion on governance arguing that “the recently renewed interest in governance can be dated to the mid-1970s”, though he identifies the last two decades as the era of a “revival and explicit and sustained theoretical and practical concern with governance as opposed to government” (Jessop, 1995, p. 308). Thus, the term ‘governance’ has existed for a long time, but its meaning, as used currently, came about only in the late twentieth century.

The term governance is multifaceted. It “means different things in different contexts and to different people” (Mellor & Jabes, 2004, p. 3), and hence “can be generically defined as the prevailing patterns by which public power is exercised in a given social context” (Jenkins, 2001, p. 485). The differences can clearly be seen in the selected definitions of governance presented in Box 3.1.

In broad terms, the concept refers to the institutional environment in which state, civil society and citizens interact in order to manage the resources necessary for the well-being of all, through sound policies designed to achieve the common goals (Huffer & Molisa, 1999b; Mellor & Jabes, 2004; Rosenau & Czempiel, 1992). The concept of governance, therefore, is a consistent cyclical process of governing state functions placing people and their well-being as highest priorities. This can be explicitly seen from Rhodes’ definition (1997, p. 15) in which he refers to governance as “a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed”. One may easily understand from the above characteristics that governance is not synonymous with government.

Box 3.1: Selected definitions of governance

World Bank (1992, p. 3)

Governance is “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s socio-economic resources”.

Peters (1993, p. 3)

Governance “refers to steering”.

Commission on Global Governance (1995, p. 2; Weiss, 2000, p. 797)

“Governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest”.

Larmour (1996b, p. 1)

“Governance’ refers to an order that emerges from the interaction of a number of actors”.

Rhodes (1997, p. 15)

Governance refers to “a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed”.

UNDP (1997)

Governance is “the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences”.

OECD (Weiss, 2000, p. 797)

“The concept of governance denotes the use of political authority and exercise of control in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development”.

Jenkins (2001, p. 485)

Governance is “prevailing patterns by which public power is exercised in a given social context”.

Asian Development Bank (Mellor & Jabes, 2004, p. 3)

Governance is “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development”.

OUNHCHR (2006)

“Governance is the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realisation of human rights”.

Commission of the EU Communities (2007)

“Governance refers to the rules, processes and behaviour that affect the way in which powers are exercised at European level, particularly as regards openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence”.

In practice, governance is used to describe the process of governing (Rhodes, 1997, p. 46). As Rosenau (1992, p. 4) explains, both governance and government refer “to purposive behaviour, to goal-oriented activities, to systems of rule”. Government refers to the functional body which implements constituted policies with the support of all functional authorities, whereas governance is the system of rules or orders plus intentionality, which involves all stakeholders of the state, public and private sectors, civil societies and citizens to “satisfy their needs and fulfil their wants” (Rosenau & Czempiel, 1992, pp. 4-5). However, in the 1970s, Finer’s (1970, pp. 3-4, 37) definitions of government seem to connote that ‘governance’ and ‘government’ are by and large used as general terms for state affairs and its processes. Finer (1970, pp. 3-4, 37) used the terms as ‘homonyms’ and one can still find examples for both government and governance as used currently deriving from his definitions of government. He defines governance as; a) the activity or the process of governing and he later identified this as ‘governance’; b) the state of affairs in which this activity or process is to be found – that of condition of ordered rule; c) those people charged with the duty of governing, and d) the manner, method or system by which a particular society is governed. Later he defines government as “standard arrangement for taking decisions affecting the group and for giving effect to them” (Finer, 1970, pp. 3-4, 37). For Rosenau (1992) governance is a system of rule when it is approved by the majority or at least by the most influential people of those affected by the processes of the system, whereas government can exist without acceptance of a majority.

When the concept is examined through people’s perspectives, especially people from geographically dispersed communities, this thesis has chosen to describe governance as a system which is able to take care of its people by providing all the means of their well-being and giving opportunities to every citizen to benefit from and enjoy its resources and facilities (extracted from field notes in the Maldives and Vanuatu). For the researcher and these fragmented communities, when any governance system is effective, efficient and responsible in providing opportunities to its people, then that falls into the definition of ‘good governance’ or ‘good enough governance’.

3.2.1 Uses of governance

World governments and their institutional capacity for socio-economic development have been a concern ever since the international financial institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, emerged following the Bretton Woods agreement for the reconstruction of the war-torn world after World War II. Different management and development orthodoxies arose in different countries, especially in the developing countries, to bring about socio-economic development for their people. These surfaced under different agendas, sometimes as reform programmes, structural adjustment programmes, or multilateral and bilateral agendas for promoting democracy in the developing countries. The intended main objective of these agendas has been claimed, now and in the past, as economic growth and development. As a result, some countries improved their socio-economic status and others experienced disappointments such as the '*African Crisis*' (Goetz & O'Brien, 1995; Moore, 1993a; World Bank, 1989).

The use of the term governance, therefore, has kept evolving and changing its conceptual framework over the past decades as required for the purpose. This can be viewed clearly from governance literature such as Rhodes (1997, 2000), Hirst (2000), and Jenkins (2001). Rhodes (1997, pp. 46-52, 2000, pp. 55-63) identifies eight uses of governance: governance as the minimal state, governance as corporate governance, governance as the new public management, governance as socio-cybernetic system, governance as self-organising networks, governance as international interdependence, governance as the new political economy and governance as 'good governance'. Five of these uses are briefly summarised here because they advocate, by and large, people-centred conceptual frameworks and civil society participation:

Governance as corporate governance generally refers to a more commercial style of management giving overall management to organisations to run the mandatory business with legitimate accountability and regulations. The principle ideologies of this use are somewhat similar with New Public Management and good governance in terms of advocacy of openness and accountability.

Governance as the ‘new public management’ (NPM): NPM introduces private sector management techniques to the public sector emphasising professional management, result and customer orientation. The use suggests creating incentive structures into public service provision through contracting out of the services in competitive markets.

Governance as socio-cybernetic system: This refers to governance as a system of interaction and intervention of all involved actors of the state to achieve the common goals. Under this use policies and their outcomes are the result of negotiations in between all affected parties and contribution of their knowledge and resources. New patterns such as public-private partnerships and co-operative management are introduced in this use.

Governance as self-organising networks: This use sees government as one of the many stakeholders (e.g. private and associational sectors) of the governance networks who are involved in the societal affairs and advocates inter-organisational linkages. This use of governance suggests that networks are autonomous as self-governing bodies but with the responsibility.

Governance as ‘good governance’: The most recent use of the term, it refers to an efficient public service system with an independent judicial system. It is almost two decades since the ‘good governance’ concept was been introduced by the World Bank and other international donor agencies and used widely to reform governments under different programmes and agendas. The use involves other democratic values such as an independent public auditor, pluralistic institutional structure, and free press (Rhodes, 1997, pp. 46-52).

Most of these uses are covered and discussed implicitly or explicitly in governance, global governance, and national and international development literature, for example in Hirst’s (2000, pp. 14-19) “Five versions of governance”. Jenkins (2001, p. 485) summarises Hirst’s ‘five versions’ as 1) economic development; 2) international institutions and regimes; 3) corporate governance; 4) new public

management, and 5) network governance. In his discussions on economic development, Hirst (2000, p. 14) highlights that the concept of ‘good governance’ is necessary to achieve economic development in developing countries together with input from international development agencies and donor countries. Most of the patterns and policies encompassed in these uses of the governance concept, good governance in particular, are based on economists’ perspectives, such as cutting the size of the public service and privatisation (Henderson, 2006, p. 11). The concept of governance in whatever form or use, therefore, seeks an effective people-centred system in order to bring about betterment for the people affected by the system.

After having reviewed some of the meanings and definitions and uses of governance (also see chapter 1), one can argue that there is no universal definition and use which can be applied universally. In fact, governance is a phenomenon which varies, based on social context, place, purpose and epoch. However, one cannot deny the philosophical elements of statehood and sovereignty, which lay the foundation for the conceptual framework of the ‘governance’ of a community and nation, and their existence in all societies. One of the most important state functions is believed to be the mediation of justice, encompassing all aspects of social justice, including an “unprejudiced access to social goods and services”, which are prerequisites for societal well-being (Helu, 1997, p. 3).

Socio-economic security for all citizens is the other important aspect of state functions. Social justice and socio-economic security are the very aspects no society may deny, regardless of faith, culture and tradition. Governance, therefore, is a society-centred phenomenon. Larmour (1996a, p. 10) explains the strong relationship between state and society, drawing on “Adam Smith’s famous three duties of the sovereign”: defending society from violence and invasion; policing and protecting members of the community from any injustice and oppression; and creating and maintaining public works and institutions for the common good, so they are not influenced by any individual’s personal interest. The contemporary concept of governance suggests that the state can pursue common interests through co-ordination of public, private and informal sectors, with a great deal of reliance on the

informal sector (Pierre, 2000). A strong triangular relationship between actors is illustrated in most of the governance models, which will be discussed below in brief.

3.2.2 Models of governance

The meanings, definitions and uses of governance discussed above underscore the reciprocal relationship between actors of the state and society in running their affairs in order to solve societal problems and achieve common goals. The debates on meanings and definitions of governance create ample space and enormous possibilities for various models of governance in a society, considering both traditional and institutional values based on common interests. Emerging forms of governance, “should be seen as the alternative expressions of the collective interest”, not as a replacement but a supplement to pursue common interests “through traditional, institutional channels” (Pierre, 2000, p. 3). Governance models, therefore, are constructed to demonstrate the relationship between the actors in a state and society. It is a relationship which creates an effective and efficient government through moral and mutual interaction and co-ordination between each party.

The thesis here will introduce three models from the available literature: Larmour’s (1996a) use of Polanyi’s form of integration, Helu’s (1997) model of governance and Bavinck et al’s (2005) interactive governance model. These three models illustrate the triangular relationship of the functions but some are more inclusive than others in promoting the roles of different actors of state society. The thesis has chosen these three models to demonstrate community empowerment through inclusive and participatory governance processes, as advocated by most of the above commentaries on governance. These models will be the basis for my proposed governance models in chapter 8.

In the first model (see Figure 3.1), Larmour treats hierarchy as equivalent to the state, market to the economy, and community to society, based on Polanyi’s interpretation of economic functions within a society published in 1957, describing “how the economy is embedded in social institutions” (Larmour, 1996a, p. 4). Larmour applies Polanyi’s model to the concepts of governance and development

administration to illustrate the institutional and functional relationships of the state, economy and society. This model suggests a generally triangular relationship between all stakeholders, including formal and informal or direct and indirect actors, at the macro and micro levels of governance and development administration. However, Larmour's model does not posit the state as having an explicit role and power, nor does the model explicitly correspond to the role of civil society, although community is treated as society, in general.

The second triangular model is Helu's (1997) governance model (see Figure 3.2), which illustrates the core relationship between state, society, and market, underscoring the vital central relationship of the judicial system to all parties. Interestingly, this model creates a scenario where the state is given special status as the leading actor, while also explicitly identifying the role of civil society, the informal or the third sector, which acts on behalf of the community. Helu's model corresponds to the notion of contemporary governance or good governance covering the main elements of governance, such as clear involvement of civil society, private sector in state governance, which would in turn increase accountability.

Such models may represent, in general, the functional panorama in the ‘developed democratic’ world after undergoing years of practice, and all the trial stages. What about the developing states who are struggling to revive or establish new systems, embracing ‘worldly-claimed concepts’ after they have gained sovereignty from their former colonial powers? It is no less important to consider that the construction of such a model may go through several stages of evolution, since there is no normative universal model. The limitations of one model may be corrected by integrating new ideas or developing a new model. Obviously, a similar process led to the contemporary concept of ‘good governance’, which is a result of inventions and experiments, but still remains ‘as a policy metaphor’ and “continues to mean different things to different people” (Doornbos, 2003, p. 4; Hyden & Court, 2002, p. 7). It is, therefore, crucial when a model is designed for any society to bear in mind the purpose, nature of the place and its cultural values through the lens of the strengths and weaknesses of both system and place.

As a development practitioner who is concerned with all kind of societal problems, I see governance as a state apparatus applied to problem solving and opportunity creation, by involving all stakeholders of the state and society, public, private and civil-society. Governance is an interactive process among state stakeholders (Larmour, 1996b). Involving all stakeholders of the governance system will reflect the concerns of all whenever there is a need to address a societal problem, because the primary aspirations of a civil society should be to enhance the well-being of the community (Lovan, Murray, & Shaffer, 2004, p. 10).

For this important reason, the thesis is very much inspired by Bavinck’s model (2005) of ‘interactive governance’ (see Figure 3.3), which he applied to fisheries governance, and by his three orders of governance: solving problems and creating opportunities; building governing institutions, and guiding behaviour. The model demonstrates that all actors need to be involved in all these three orders of governance simultaneously, through cooperation, coordination and participation, so a concurrent consultative approach can be effectively maintained in the governance process. The model also corresponds to the participatory governance, as described by

Robert Lovan et al. (2004) and other scholars (Fung & Wright, 2001), a process of governance that will deepen the 'democratic values' within a society.

Since Banvick's interactive governance model is developed for fishing communities, such a model could potentially empower island communities, like the Maldives and Vanuatu. However, an interactive approach in these fragmented communities would require a well established local governance system with a strong national governance system. Now the question is how do we determine that governance functions are performing well enough for the well-being of people? Performance assessment of a system can help to identify problems and loopholes within the system, whereby they can be addressed.

3.3.3 Measuring governance

Measuring governance has been seen as complex work because some of the aspects such as voice and accountability, effectiveness and control of corruption are not easy to measure. However, there is a growing interest in measuring governance at national and international levels, especially among international donor agencies, such as the World Bank, IMF, UNDP and ADB, concerning whether aid funds are being effectively used to achieve the identified objectives in development projects (Reddy,

2006, p. 162). The other important reason for increasing interest in measuring governance performance is “trying to link governance with development outcomes” and to see how well governments are performing for the well-being of their people (Court, Hyden, & Mease, 2002, p. 2).

Government performance is assessed using governance indices. There are numbers of indices developed by international organisations, individuals affiliated to universities, and individual researchers. Kaufmann and his colleagues’ (Kaufmann, 2005; Kaufmann, Kraay, & Zoido-Lobaton, 1999) World Bank index covers over 200 countries and is based on six key aspects of governance: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption (Reddy, 2006, p. 162; World Bank, 2007a, pp. 1-3). This index has been compiled annually since 1996 and formed the basis for the World Bank’s booklet, *A Decade of Measuring the Quality of Governance; Governance Matters 2007: Worldwide Governance Indicators, 1996-2007* (World Bank, 2007b). Court and his colleagues (Court, et al., 2002) developed governance indices for the United Nations University, which carried out a cross country governance assessment survey for 22 countries using questionnaires comprised of 30 indicators, covering the same governance arenas included in the previous World Bank index (Court, et al., 2002).

Of particular relevance to this study is the ongoing development of a governance index for Pacific countries by University of South Pacific (Duncan & Toatu, 2004; Duncan, Toatu, & Gani, 2004). The Fijian index for governance has already been developed and they are working on a group of other Pacific countries including Vanuatu. The index is based on measurable data covering four sub-indices: the rule of law index, government effectiveness index, social development index and regulatory quality index.

There are two other works on governance indices which were developed under the auspices of World Bank: Huther and Shah (Huther & Shah, 1998) and Manning and colleagues (Manning, Mukherjee, & Gokcekus, 2000). The Huther and Shah’s index measures observable aspects of governance, such as citizen participation and social

development while Manning et al's index assesses the institutional environment and the impact of institutional change on public sector performance through an officials' opinion survey on rules, policies and resources (Reddy, 2006, p. 164). Nevertheless, I argue that an inclusive governance index should cover all the different areas focused in these indices.

Most of these indices have been developed by international bodies as an external assessment; therefore, they tend to cover macro-level perspectives, except for Duncan and colleagues' work (Duncan & Toatu, 2004; Duncan, et al., 2004), which has a regional level focus. There is a need for initiatives by respective countries to carry out governance assessment at national and local levels. Moreover, there is currently emerging concern over local governance performance, because it is strongly linked to the most vulnerable groups, whether in developed, developing or least developed countries. The above indices may cover local governance performance and local population perspectives as a whole, but this newly emerging interest may require more specific coverage.

3.3 The emergence of 'good governance' in development discourse

In the 1990s, governance and the reform of public institutions became central in development discourse, since the issue was identified as the major problem in relation to the crisis of *Sub-Saharan Africa* in 1989 in the World Bank Report (Henderson, 2006; Larmour, 1997b; Santiso, 2001; World Bank, 1989). The governance agenda emerged in response to the World Bank's "disappointments with structural adjustment" and its "traditional singular focus on economic growth" (Goetz & O'Brien, 1995, p. 17).

Ever since the World Bank introduced the concept of governance to the international development arena, it has continuously been reviewing and redefining the concept as part of its international development activities. Since 1989, the World Bank has been publishing "streams of statements and research reports about governance" in the process of advocating the concept (Harrison, 2005, p. 243). Some of the World

Bank's prominent publications which played a major role in the early stages of its advocacy are *Governance: A Review*, *Governance and Development*, and *Governance: the World Bank's Experience*, in 1991, 1992 and 1994, respectively. The World Bank, initially, identified 'good governance' as a 'structural necessity' for market reform, whereas, in a later stage of the decade, the Bank emphasised 'good governance' as a precondition for socio-economic development (Chowdhary & Skarstedt, 2005, pp. 4-5). The World Bank's focus, therefore, has broadened to include socio-economic aspects of development rather than just structural adjustment. The World Bank's advocacy of the governance agenda become more vocal and influential in the international development arena due to the contributions from wider international aid agencies, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and other multilateral and bilateral development agencies like the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

'Good governance' orthodoxy is identified in most governance and international development literature as a phenomenon promoted by contemporary aid donors with the idea of empowering and enhancing the state, market and civil society relationship (Helu, 1997; Huffer & Molisa, 1999b; Kaufmann, 2005; Kooiman & Bavinck, 2005; Lancaster, 1993; Larmour, 1998; Macdonald, 1998; Mellor & Jabes, 2004; Minogue, 2002; Moore, 1993b, 1993c; Ray, 1998). However, Henderson (2006, p. 10) observes that 'good governance' has tended to be 'preached' as a salvation to developing countries by Western aid donors. This links the notion of good governance with 'conditionality' and aid sanctioned by the aid communities for developing countries; hence, a syndrome of resistance has developed, with recipients calling 'good governance' a concept that "dominates official Western aid policy and development thinking" (Leftwich, 1993, p. 605). It could be suggested that there are two main reasons for this resistance from recipients: firstly, imposition of the pre-conceived concept without considering the socio-cultural factors of the recipient country; and secondly, the advocacy of governance being associated with rigid 'conditionality'.

If one carries out a literature survey of the fundamental elements and ideologies promoted by international aid communities, the findings would show ideological and terminological convergence and similarities. Likewise, these very elements and ideologies can also be found in academic research, such as in Larmour (1997a, 1997b, 1998), Rhodes (1997), Macdonald (1998), Duncan (2003, 2005; 2004) and most of the known governance indexations like the Kaufmann (2006) and Gani and Duncan (2004). This implies wide agreement on the principles of governance among advocates, aid communities and academic scholars. The disagreement may begin when it comes to the details of the elements and their applicability because of respective parties' objectives and purposes of advocacy. A brief comparative literature survey on the elements and ideologies of different international communities will now be provided. This comparative examination is elaborated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 shows that seven international actors involved in promoting governance or good governance, the World Bank, UNDP, UNHCHR, British government's foreign aid policy, USAID, ADB and EU Commission, have convergent ideologies, though their approaches are different. It can be argued that some elements of governance are more implicit and detailed in their manuscripts than the others, depending on the circumstances, and the nature of their roles of involvement and intervention.

Table 3.1: Governance and its elements from perspectives of international development/aid communities⁴

Donor advocates of governance	Governance elements identified by donor communities				
<i>The World Bank's Content of governance lending 1991-93 (Minogue, 2002)</i>	Decentralisation, capacity building	Economic management	State-owned enterprise reforms	Participation	Legal framework
<i>UNDP's identified factors of governance (1995) (Minogue, 2002)</i>	Political legitimacy	Freedom of association and participation	A fair and reliable judicial system	Bureaucratic and financial accountability	
<i>UNHCHR's key elements of good governance in Resolution 2000/64 (OUNHCHR, 2006)</i>	Transparency	Responsibility	Accountability	Participation	Responsiveness (to the needs of the people)
<i>British government's foreign aid policy's key components of governance (1997) (Minogue, 2002)</i>	Legitimacy (meant pluralist, multi party democracy)	Accountability	Competence, refers to appropriate and effective public services	Respect for Law and human rights	
<i>USAID's goals focused on promoting democracy and</i>	Strengthening the Rule of Law and	Promoting more genuine and	Increased development of a	Promoting more transparent and	

⁴ Also see in Turner and Hulme, 1997, p.231.

<i>good governance (USAID, 2006)</i>	Respect for Human Rights	competitive elections and political processes	politically active civil society	accountable government institutions	
<i>The ADB's basic elements of Good Governance (Mellor & Jabes, 2004)</i>	Accountability	Participation	Predictability; which refers to existence of Laws, regulations and policies	Transparency	
<i>The Commission of the EU's principles of Good Governance (Commission of the EU Communities, 2001)</i>	Openness	Participation	Accountability	Effectiveness of the policies	Coherence of the policies and action

The elements of governance that each institution emphasises differ according to their particular interests, for instance, the World Bank has explicitly identified economic management and state-owned enterprises related areas in which the Bank's own interests rest. One can infer similar interests from ADB's elements, as it is concerned with 'predictability', referring to the existence of laws, regulations and policies. The ADB's 'predictability' aims, by and large, to secure financial investments and sanction loans. In the same manner, USAID is putting its efforts into promoting democracy and good governance agendas in the four distinct areas where its interest lie. The British government stands for a similar kind of advocacy, putting multi-party democracy first. The United Nations' former Secretary General, Koffi Annan, clearly stated that the UN programme's virtual target comprises all the key elements of good governance: "safeguarding the rule of law; verifying elections; training police; monitoring human rights; fostering investment; and promoting accountable administration" (Desai & Potter, 2002, p. 380). Annan's statement corresponds with the key elements outlined by the UNDP and UN High Commission on Human Rights. The EU Commission's elements reflect its concerns, to maintain access for members of the Union to each other with coherent policies.

Almost all the same aspects are considered, with slight variations and with detailed sub-dimensions, in most indexation approaches, such as Kaufmann, Kraay and Lobaton's (1999), Huther and Shah's (1998), and Mukherjee and Gokceku's (2000) indices, used to measure performance and effectiveness of governance (Duncan, et al., 2004, p. 4). Gani and Duncan's (2004) composite governance index for the Pacific Island Countries is also based on the aspects outlined in Table 3.1.

New terms are emerging in contemporary development discourse, for example, 'sustainable development', 'good enough governance' and 'best practices' or 'good practices', which are very much linked to good governance ideology. The UNDP's recent motto has become 'sustainable development'. The World Bank has equated the 'good governance' concept with 'good practice' in a recent report on governance of fisheries, narrowing down its initial ideas on the concept (Kooiman & Bavinck, 2005, p. 15). The Asian Development Bank is focusing on private sector participation. It can be said that the varying ideologies of governance are similar and

convergent (Minogue, 2002, pp. 117-134). Nevertheless, it is clear from Table 3.1 that patterns of advocacy are objectively oriented and stress on specific elements is based on respective donors' ideologies. The governance concept should be modified based on socio-cultural values and natural environment to suit the respective place and people, while preserving the fundamentals of governance and democratic values.

The most frequent critiques of the contemporary concept of governance as promoted by international donor communities are its conceptual vagueness, breadth and its all-inclusive concepts. Grindle (2004, p. 525) argues that, although good governance has become as a necessary condition to poverty reduction and development in general, "good governance is deeply problematic as a guide to development" because of its all inclusive characteristics. Grindle's survey (2004, pp. 527-528) of World Bank Reports from 1997 to 2002/2003 shows that the list of "what must be done" to achieve good governance has significantly increased from 45 tasks in 1997 to 116 in 2002/2003.

Some scholars argue that the links between governance and economic growth are unproven (Chang, 2002; Duncan, 2003; Minogue, 2002). One can confirm this argument by providing practical evidence from the real world. Figure 3.4 plots the annual growth rate of five countries; two of them, UK and the US, claim to be among the most democratic nations with good governance, and the other three, China, Russia and Uzbekistan, are known as communist or autocratic socialist states.

The graph shows that China's economy is in enormous growth. Uzbekistan has a GDP growth of 7.3 percent and the Russia has seen growth in its economy in 2006 with higher growth trend than UK and USA. One may also bring Singapore, a wealthy SIDS, as an example for the same argument. Singapore is a fast growing economy without having all the so-called "good governance and democratic values" outlined in Table 3.1, yet at the same time its HD indices are high (UNDP, 2007). Based on the above examples, one may question whether, after all, we need to impose one particular type of governance system, or do the socio-economic growth and well-being of the people depend on the commitment and vision of the government? Perhaps, this economic growth and prosperity that we observe now in these states could be even more advanced and more evenly distributed amongst the population when political commitment comes with a more appropriate system with good governance and democratic values.

Among the critiques, it is also argued that the philosophical ideologies of good governance concept are "ahistorical" and do not reflect what today's developed countries experienced when they were still developing or underdeveloped (Grindle, 2004, p. 531). Doornbos (2003: 4, 5) expounds that "there has hardly been a consensus as to its core meaning, and less and less of a common idea as to how it could be applied more concretely" rather the term governance has an open-ended quality and vagueness. Doornbos (2003:9) further comments that 'good governance' has "donor-conceptualised" or "Western-derived" standards rather than a universal one. Therefore, judgements about 'good' or 'bad governance' may differ for other cultures (Doornbos, 2003:9, Ray, 1998: 2). Local standards, perspectives and cultural norms should not be overlooked when such systems are conceptualised, if they are to be practical and effective. In the same manner, socio-economic and environmental factors, such as "location, size of the economy, market configuration, community perceptions and socio-political history" (Ray, 1998:11), must be considered when adopting the concept of 'good governance'.

Having acknowledged both the definitions and critiques of governance, it can be said that there is no such thing as 'one size fits all'. Nevertheless, the challenge of this

proposed study is to explore how the so-called ‘western phenomenon’ of good governance can contribute to the well-being of small island states.

3.4 Linking governance to development and vice versa

Many development concepts have been adapted for international development, since reconstruction of the war-torn world began and the Bretton Woods’ financial institutions were established in the aftermath of World War II. Hyden and Court (2002, pp. 1-6) describe the conceptual evolutions occurring in the process of development in terms of four shifts and outline how strategic focus on development has been evolving to date, based on past experience. These four development shifts are briefly given below⁵:

- 1) In the first shift during the 1950s to 1960s, development concepts were implemented as pre-planned *projects* by governments “*for their people*”.
- 2) In the second shift, in the 1960s to 1970s, the projects’ approach was replaced by *programmes*, taking a holistic poverty-oriented approach rather than the single dimension of human needs. The main idea of the development in this phase was identified as “*development of the people*”.
- 3) The third phase occurred in the 1970s to 1980s, when it was recognised that governments alone could not take the heavy burden of development. The main development perception changed to an exercise being carried out “*with the people*”, changing *policies* to incorporate market incentives, the private sector and informal organisations in development management. This was the beginning of the ‘structural adjustment’ era in development discourse.
- 4) The fourth shift has been underway since the 1990s, with development now not only about projects, programmes, and policies but also about *politics*. This is where the democracy and ‘good governance’ agendas have emerged within the international development arena, recognising development as something done “*by the people*” through responsive democratic mechanisms.

Taking an analytical glimpse at Hyden and Court’s four shifts of development, one can argue that there have always been three core elements involved throughout the

⁵ See (Weiss, 2000). He also has described the strategic evolution of the development concept.

four phases: governance, policies, and politics. People have always been the central focus of development in all phases, but, in the first two phases, people received development as a free ‘gift parcel’ in which they had no active role. As a result, the expected outcomes did not eventuate. However, the perception began to change in the third phase by involving the people as partners in the development business. Finally, the current phase, the fourth shift, has sought to give ownership of the development to the people through their own initiatives and participation in governance.

Governance and development are, therefore, recognised as correlated phenomena. Isolating one from the other may not yield a very fruitful outcome. As a result, acknowledgment of the importance of governance and ‘politics’ for development is significantly increasing among citizens of the world, regardless of their cultural and spiritual values, or categorical and geographical boundaries. This recognition is increasing, especially, among educated elites, reform-minded citizens, and development practitioners, if not as a precondition, at least a requisite of development (Goldsmith, 2007, p. 165; Grindle, 2004, pp. 525, 527; Hyden & Court, 2002, p. 5; Leftwich, 1993, p. 605). Governance is a vital phenomenon in all societies.

Regardless of whose ideologies predominate over the concept, as someone who has been involved in the developmental field as a practitioner, this thesis argues that a robust system which enables political commitment to empower communities will make a difference in terms of development. The comparative fieldwork in the Maldives and Vanuatu, which will be discussed in detail in the findings, shows the differences in progress where development initiatives are initiated at the community level because of the enhanced community empowerment and awareness.

3.4.1 What is development?

In simplest terms, development can be seen as a “synonym for improvement” (Seers, 1969, p. 2). Chambers defines development as “good change” (Chambers, 2003, p. xiv). Development is broadly understood as a process of empowering people in all

aspects of their lives, with national economic progress through participatory democratic processes (Cowen & Shenton, 1996, p. 1)⁶. Amartya Sen (1999, p. 3) defines development “as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy”, and the “real freedoms” have been associated with positive freedom (Gasper, 2004, p. 163). Todaro (1985, p. 8) defines development economics, unlike traditional economics which only concern with economic growth, as bringing “the fruits of economic progress to the broadest segments of their populations” in the most effective manner through structural and institutional transformations.

Until very recently, development meant economic growth, with less concern given to socio-political aspects, on the assumption that economic growth would develop all other aspects automatically (Martinussen, 1997, pp. 5-6). Economic growth means increasing the level of per capita income, which merely concentrates on the national income and uses GDP growth as a yardstick for the development. Seers (1969, p. 1) argues that national income is often used as a development measure because it is convenient and “politicians find a single comprehensive measure is useful”. Both economic growth and economic stability are vital to sustainable development and reducing poverty and vulnerability, as are other societal aspects of well-being and quality of life (UNDP, 2006; World Bank, 2007c). It is clear from these definitions that development involves improvement in people’s life and their well-being, not only economic growth. Therefore, economic growth and socio-human development cannot be isolated from each other.

National economic growth will not necessarily guarantee the well-being of the people nor the development, in general, unless enough opportunities are created and choices given to every citizen to share the fruit of growth, as Todaro (1985, p. 8) clearly states in his definition, “to bring the fruits of economic progress to the broadest segments of their populations”. In the same manner, the World Bank and UNDP denoted that economic growth cannot guarantee access to basic necessities, education, health, water and sanitation and their improvements without political commitment and fair redistribution of the economy (UNDP, 2006; World Bank, 2007a, 2007c). The UNDP, in its *Human Development Report*, has noted that “some

⁶ See Escobar, 1995:4 and Todaro, 1985:8

countries have a *Human Development Index* (HDI) rank far below their income rank, while others invert this relationship” as in the cases of Bahrain and Chile and Namibia and Egypt illustrated in Figure 3.5 (UNDP, 2006, p. 264). Indeed, it is argued that the development ideology “based on faith in technology, growth, and progress has brought to many Third World countries the opposite of what the ideology promised” (Ligon & Schechter, 2002, p. 52), resulting in automatic changes to other socio-economic and environmental aspects of life.

More recently, development theories have integrated other societal aspects together with economic growth. As a result, the development norms and perspectives have broadened and ultimately alternative development theories and approaches have appeared (Martinussen, 1997, pp. 291-303)⁷. In the first Human Development Report in 1990, Mahbub ul Haq, one of the founders of human development theory and eventually the human development index, describes his historical definition of development as being “to create an enabling environment in which people can enjoy long, healthy and creative lives” because “people are the real wealth of nations” (UNDP, 2006, p. 263). In fact, the UNDP’s Human Development Report reflects recent development in the theories, which are now more concerned with deliberate changes in the well-being of society in all respects. The *Human Development Report* introduced new indicators, called the Human Development Index (HDI), to look “beyond GDP to a broader definition of well-being”, in acknowledgement that the HD index does not cover all aspects of human development, such as human rights, democracy and inequality (UNDP, 2006, p. 263). The HDI covers three area of well-being: long and healthy life, education, and standard of living, which are measured by life expectancy, adult literacy and enrolment at the three educational levels, primary, secondary and tertiary, and purchasing power parity income, respectively (UNDP, 2006). Consequently, this thesis endorses the type of development which brings

⁷ See also Cowen and Shenton, 1996:439 and Thomas, 2000:23-48

well-being to the people and equitable economic growth: a development which benefits all sectors of the community, without exception, characterised by the optimal, not exploitative, utilisation of all available resources. In this way, policies can be in favour of people-centred development when communities are empowered through strong community based organisations and a civil society that can act on behalf of its people with the other two state actors, public and private.

3.5 Role of civil society in development

Current trends of development have changed to a participatory governance process. Civil societies, especially at local levels, have been involved to a great extent in participatory development (Mohan, 2002, p. 51) because they can be “vehicles for participation in development programme and empowerment of target groups of poor people” (Mohan & Stokke, 2000, p. 248). Civil society also has a significant role to play in making governments more responsive, and bringing democratic and good governance values to the system (Mohan & Stokke, 2000, p. 248).

The term civil society may have a long history in societal politics. However, more recently it has been traced back to the period when the idea of modern democracy began as an “integral part of development of the West as is either market or state” (Hyden, Court, & Mease, 2003, pp. 3-4). The concept of civil society as a key stakeholder in state governance has emerged and been widely discussed on the international stage since 1990s (Edwards, 2004). The term civil society has various meanings and definitions based on its use and culture. Gellner (1995, p. 32) defines civil society as a “set of diverse non-governmental institutions, which is strong enough to counterbalance the state” without blocking the state from its duty and law enforcement. Hulme and Edwards (1997, pp. 24-25) describe civil society as an entity that inhabits the space between people and the state as an influential group, made up of all kinds of associational groups among a society, including political parties and business corporations in a broad sense. Rooy (Rooy, 2002, pp. 489-492) has identified six different elements of civil society: as values and norms, civil a collective noun, a space for action, an historical moment, anti-hegemony and an antidote to the state. Civil society, therefore, can be brought into the action from a number of perspectives. However, this research will use civil society to refer to the

people and social organisations which create a link with the state (Martinussen, 1997, p. 289). This definition is appropriate because civil society is a phenomenon which plays an important intermediary role between people and the state. According to Hyden et al. (2003, pp. 3-4), civil society sits between citizens (individuals and families) and states as a carrier of citizens' grievances and demands in an attempt to address the problems.

Characteristically, civil societies work voluntarily with the state and its people to achieve common goals (Harper, 1996, p. 125). Nonetheless, civil society can be one of the strong three "spheres" of the state (Rooy, 2002, p. 490) if the environment is conducive in terms of five important ethical principles: freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom from discrimination, consultative process in policy-making, and respect for rules (Hyden, et al., 2003, pp. 12-13). Therefore, civil society, made up of groups such as NGOs, Community-based organisations and traditional chiefs, is an important body to advance the elements of good governance and to intervene in order to bring proper development to any society. Furthermore civil society can play a major role in reducing vulnerability of all kinds, socio-economic, environmental, and so forth.

3.6 Vulnerability: the concept, its uses and meanings

The term 'vulnerability', as mentioned earlier (see chapter one), has been recognised as a multi-dimensional and complex concept that can be used in different contexts, such as socio- economic, cultural, political and environmental development. Due to its 'common-sense meaning' of being exposed to risk and uncertainty, and dynamic nature, the term is also used in areas like income, health and poverty-related issues (G. S. Bernard, 2007, p. 4; Campbell, 2003, p. 97; Wisner, Blaikie, Cannon, & Davis, 2004, p. 11; World Bank, 2000/2001, p. 19). Although the concept of vulnerability represents the degree of harm to which a system or unit is subject due to exposure to shocks and stresses, there is no consensus about the term. However, the notion of vulnerability is a risk-related phenomenon; hence, it is widely used in dealing with the adverse impact on socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental development from risks and hazards, climate changes, crimes and epidemics. The magnitude of the vulnerability of a system or unit is determined

based on the possible adverse impact on the system or unit. Most research on vulnerability deals with natural hazards, environmental and poverty-related issues, but currently economic and social vulnerability are also gaining some focus in the development arena.

3.6.1 Meaning and uses of the vulnerability

Generally speaking, the word ‘vulnerability’ is understood by people as something which shows weakness and defencelessness or, in other words, ‘fragility’ and ‘susceptibility’ to harm. However, there are various meanings and uses in the literature, based on the respective contextual frameworks and subject areas. Vulnerability and other disaster-associated terms such as risk, hazard and resilience have been widely used without universally agreed definitions (Bogardi, 2006, p. 2). Birkmann’s (2006, p. 11) literature survey identifies “more than 25 different definitions, concepts and methods to systematise vulnerability”. Some of the commonly used definitions of vulnerability are listed in Box 3.2.

However, to understand the concept in its broadest sense, it is important to see the linguistic roots of the word vulnerability and the specific meaning used in its origin. In order to understand the vitality of the phenomenon in the development arena and its interrelationship within the socio-politics and governance it is also important to present a quick overview of the popular definitions of the concept.

Box 3.2: Selected Definitions of Vulnerability

Gabor and Griffith (1980, p. 325)

Vulnerability is “the threat to which a community is exposed taking into account not only the properties of the chemical agents involved but also, the ecological situation of the community and general state of emergency preparedness at any given point in time”.

Susman et al. (1983, p. 264)

“Vulnerability is the degree to which different classes in society are differentially at risk, both in terms of the probability of occurrence of an extreme physical event and the degree to which the community absorbs the effects of extreme physical events and helps different classes to recover”.

Bohle et al. (1994, pp. 37-38)

Vulnerability is “an aggregate measure of human welfare that integrates environmental, social, economic and political exposure to a range of potential harmful perturbations”.

Cutter et al. (2000, p. 715)

“Vulnerability is the potential for loss of property or life from environmental hazards”.

Kelly and Adger (2000, p. 328)

Vulnerability is “the ability or inability of individuals and social groupings to respond to, in the sense of cope with, recover from or adapt to, any external stress placed on their livelihoods and well-being”.

Briguglio (2003, p. 2)

“Vulnerability is proneness to harm or damage originating from external forces”.

Wisner et al. (2004, p. 11)

“Vulnerability is the characteristics of a person or group in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard”.

UNDP (2004, p. 11)

“Vulnerability is a human condition or process resulting from physical, social, economic and environmental factors, which determine the likelihood and scale of damage from the impact of a given hazard”.

McKenzie et al. (2005, p. 7)

“The potential to suffer harm or loss, related to the capacity to cope with a hazard and recover from its impact”.

Chambers (2006, p. 33)

“Vulnerability refers to exposure to contingencies and stress, and difficulty in coping with them. Vulnerability has thus two sides: an external side of risks, shocks, and stress to which an individual or household is subject: and an internal side which is defencelessness, meaning a lack of means to cope without damaging loss”.

The origin of the word vulnerability goes “to the Latin word *vulnus*, meaning to ‘a wound’, and *vulnerare*, ‘to wound’” (Dow, 1992, p. 420; Ford, 2002, p. 2; Kelly & Adger, 2000, p. 328). The word vulnerable is also derived from the late Latin

vulnerabilis which was used by the Romans to describe the condition of a wounded soldier lying on the battlefield, at risk of death or further attack (Ford, 2002, p. 2; Kelly & Adger, 2000, p. 238). The original use of the Latin word *vulnerabilis* corresponds with some arguments that the term vulnerability is used to describe the existing condition of a system, society and individual, and their capacity to cope, rather than defining the likelihood of people being injured or killed by an event in the future (Cannon, Twigg, & Rowell, 2003, p. 4; Kelly & Adger, 2000, p. 328). Blaikie et al's (Blaikie, Cannon, Davis, & Wisner, 1994, p. 9) definition of vulnerability also corresponds to this argument: "the characteristics of a person or group in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the impact of a natural hazard"⁸. Kelly and Adger (2000) and Cannon et al. (2003, pp. 4-5) support Blaikie et al's definition and adopt a definition with a similar concept. Kelly and Adger (2000, p. 328) define vulnerability "in terms of the ability or inability of individuals and social groupings to respond to, in the sense of cope with, recover from or adapt to, any external stress placed on their livelihoods and well-being". They apply 'external stress' to stress that is not within the control of the system, individuals and groups. Cannon et al. (2003, pp. 4-5), similarly, describe the concept as "the characteristics of people, and the differential impacts on the people of damage to physical structures", involving some complex set of characteristics; "people's initial well-being, livelihood and resilience, self-protection, social protection, social and political networks and institutions".

Looking at both the above arguments, the conceptual definition and the Latin meaning of the *vulnerabilis*, this thesis suggests that the situations of SIDS, especially archipelagos, are very much similar to the wounded soldier on the battlefield; their ecosystems are always vulnerable to destruction, exposing the entire livelihood security system to extreme threat. The island communities in the archipelagos can be characterised as vulnerable in terms of many of the connotations identified by Campbell (2003), ranging from weak, powerless, insecure, exposed and small to fragile. Atolls, among the Pacific island countries (PICs), have been

⁸ The definition is published with minor changes in 2004 edition: "the characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazards"(Wisner, et al., 2004, p. 11)

considered the most vulnerable to climate change due to their unique nature, such as “land area”, “number of islands”, “insularity” and “maximum elevation” (Campbell, 1995, p. 220). Vulnerability, therefore, in small island or archipelagic communities can “involve multiple threats or hazards” and the characteristics of vulnerability can be “highly variable” based on the nature and conditions of the surroundings of these islands (Campbell, 2003, p. 97). As a matter of fact, the island or archipelagic communities have their own unique coping mechanisms and perceptions, and, as Campbell (2003) argues, their resilience and knowledge should not be demeaned but used in addressing their vulnerability problems.

Vulnerability has been often seen as a phenomenon with three components: size and frequency of the exogenous shocks or sensitivity, exposure to shocks, and capacity to cope with and recover from shocks (Bohle, et al., 1994, p. 39; Campbell, 2003; Dow, 1992, pp. 420-421; Guillaumont, 2007, p. 2). These three elements, shocks, exposure and resilience, therefore, mainly recur in any discussion about vulnerability in the literature (Combes & Guillaumont, 2002, p. 24; Mustafa, 1998, p. 291). The term vulnerability is most commonly used in three main areas, economic, social and environmental, though it sometimes also covers interrelated sub-areas, such as poverty, assets, income, livelihood, epidemic and famine and areas like natural hazards, climate change, and technological failures.

3.6.1 Economic vulnerability

Economic vulnerability refers to the negative impacts on economic sectors of a system caused by any internal and external shocks. Guillaumont (2007, p. 2) defines the economic vulnerability of a state as “the risk of country seeing its development hampered by the natural or external shocks it faces”. Scholars mainly define two types of external shocks, which also can be the main sources of economic vulnerability: 1) factors related to the global trade and economy such as market price instability and changes in interest rates on the international capital market, and 2) factors originating from natural shocks, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, hurricanes, droughts and floods, which are in fact often the most devastating, (Guillaumont, 2007, p. 2; UN, 2006, p. 36; UNDP, 2002, p. 8).

It is, therefore, often argued that economic vulnerability concerns the risks to states, groups, and individuals from exogenous shocks to the systems of production and distribution, including markets and consumption. In the same manner, external shocks can be compounded by internal shocks, such as state political instability. Ineffective policies may have the same degree of negative effect on the economy. Although most often shocks bring negative changes in economic conditions, some movements can be favourable, such as a dramatic rise in the price of exports (UN, 2006, p. 11). Guillaumont (2007, p. 1), Cordina (2004, p. 23) and Turvey (2007, pp. 243-246) relate the emergence of the concept of economic vulnerability to specific concerns about the weaknesses and problems of small states and SIDS back in 1971, when the United Nations began classifying countries.

3.6.2 Environmental vulnerability

People's life support and survival very much depend on their natural environment and how well it is managed, because the entire socio-economic system of any society is based on the natural environment and its endowed resources (Howorth, 2002, p. 2; Kaly, Pratt, & Howorth, 2002, p. 1; SOPAC, 2002, p. 4). Damage to the environment and degradation in the quality of natural resources can have a negative impact on the socio-economy by decreasing the level of services it can provide to meet a country's needs (UNDP, 2002, p. 8). Environmental vulnerability, therefore, refers to the risk of damage to a country's natural ecosystems, such as reefs and shorelines, forests, soil and fresh water, including land and marine resources (Howorth, 2002, p. 2; Kaly, et al., 2002, p. 1; SOPAC, 2002, p. 4; UNDP, 2002, p. 8). Risks to the natural environment or ecosystems can be from any natural or human-induced event or process, such as cyclones and floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, mudslides or coral mining, and harbour-dredging (Howorth, 2002, p. 8; UNDP, 2002). A vulnerability reduction approach can be achieved when the two disturbances to the natural environment – natural and human-induced – are incorporated within the concept of environmental vulnerability analysis.

3.6.3 Social vulnerability

Social vulnerability is regarded as a multidimensional concept which concerns those characteristics and experiences of communities and individuals, which enable them

to respond to and recover from stresses and hazards that may have caused loss and damage to their livelihoods (Cutter, et al., 2003, p. 243; UNDP, 2002, p. 8). Social vulnerability can also be seen as the negative side of social sustainability, defined by Chambers and Conway (1991, p. 26) as referring to:

the ability of a human unit (individual, household or family) to cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, to adapt to and exploit changes in its physical, social and economic environment, and to maintain and enhance capabilities for future generations.

Springer, Gibbons and Paeniu (2002, p. 3) define social vulnerability from an island's perspective as:

terms under which the social structure of a community or a society is exposed to shock or stress typically brought about by economic strife, environmental changes, government policies or even caused by internal events and forces resulting from a combination of factors.

Based on the converse idea of social sustainability, St. Bernard (2007, p. 3) defines social vulnerability for Caribbean states as:

the inability of human units (individuals, households or families) to cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, their inability to adapt to and exploit changes in physical, social and economic environments and their inability to maintain and enhance future generations.

The last two definitions are articulated based on the geographical nature and environmental perspectives of small island states. Generally, social vulnerability has been largely an ignored area, mainly due to the difficulty in quantifying it, which is why social losses are often not gauged properly in the aftermath of a disaster or included in reports (Cutter, et al., 2003). However, there are efforts now being made to assess vulnerabilities of all kinds at different levels, national, regional and international.

3.6.4 Vulnerability assessments

The first vulnerability assessment efforts emerged in 1965 with the establishment of the *Committee for Development Policy* (CDP)⁹ and the classification of countries based on different development indicators beginning from 1971 (Guillaumont, 2007;

⁹ The *Committee for Development Policy* (CDP) is an advisory body to the *Economic and Social Council* for the United Nations.

Turvey, 2007, pp. 1-2; UN, 2006, p. vii). Currently, there is an increasing interest among international and regional development organisations, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and the South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission (SOPAC), to use vulnerability assessment as a tool for planning and policy making (Wisner, et al., 2004, p. 14). While vulnerability assessment helps policy-makers and development practitioners at national and international levels to understand development constraints, problems and issues, it also can be used as a tool to generate information on socio-economic and environmental issues and disseminate them for public awareness.

In a similar context, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and SOPAC (2005) justify the importance of the Environmental Vulnerability Index (EnVI) to understand the environmental vulnerabilities of a nation. They claim that the EnVI is one of a “new generation of tools” designed to collect a wealth of information to capture the environmental vulnerabilities and their negative impact on the socio-economy of a society (UNEP & SOPAC, 2005, p. 10). Briguglio (2003, p. 9) and Turvey (2007, p. 243) claim that vulnerability assessment has emerged as an alternative approach to evaluate the development progress in developing states, especially in SIDS. This is why some have distinguished vulnerability measures from traditional poverty measures. While vulnerability measures allow assessing and quantifying losses associated both with poverty and uncertainties or susceptibilities, poverty measures alone may not cover factors related to uncertainties and risks (Ligon & Schechter, 2002, p. 1). For this particular reason, some suggest a dynamic conceptualisation of poverty incorporating both households’ welfare and exposure to risk dimensions, which would reflect both chronic and transient poverty (ADB, 2005, p. 2). Chronic and transient poverty are common characteristics in SIDS due to natural factors and limited resources, consequently, leading to increased vulnerability. Vulnerability assessment, therefore, has become a vital approach to understand small developing states and SIDS which experience geographical and ecological development challenges.

There are many vulnerability assessments carried out by different international and regional organisations in order to address particular objectives and needs. Vulnerability Indices have been developed at different levels by various international organisations to help determine the levels of vulnerabilities of developing countries (Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States, 2000). The CDP examined 128 developing states and formulated an Economic Vulnerability Index (EconVI) to capture a country's vulnerability to natural environmental and exogenous shocks in a composite index, focusing on the size and extent of exposure to shocks (Briguglio, 2003, p. 12; UNDP, 2006, p. 7). The Commonwealth Secretariat has developed a Composite Vulnerability Index (CVI), focussing on the socio-economic and environmental aspects of 111 developing countries, comprising 37 small and 74 large states (Briguglio, 2003, p. 10; Commonwealth, 1997c; Easter, 1999, pp. 403-404; UNDP, 2006, p. 7). These two indices, the CDP's Econ VI and Commonwealth Secretariat's CVI, focus on economic and environmental vulnerabilities of developing countries, including small and large SIDS, Least Developed and Land Locked countries.

There are also some regional efforts in developing vulnerability indices. The Caribbean Development Bank devised an Economic Vulnerability Index (Econ VI), covering 95 countries (Briguglio, 2003, p. 10; UNEP, 2002a, pp. 7-8). In this index, the Caribbean Development Bank has aimed to carry out a comparative economic vulnerability analysis with other nations in order to develop Caribbean states. The Institute of Advanced Studies at the United Nations University also has carried out a vulnerability assessment of 100 developing states, resulting in a Geographic Vulnerability Index (GVI). The GVI covers four areas of geographical vulnerability; insularity, peripherality, population concentration, and susceptibility to natural disasters (UNEP, 2002a, p. 8). The Institute has given special attention to SIDS and the geographic nature of these states. Therefore, the GVI may be the most relevant to this study but the others also would be useful for comparative analysis.

Similarly, the UNEP and SOPAC's joint efforts have developed an Environmental Vulnerability Index (EnVI) aiming to provide national governments and donor agencies with information on vulnerability to the environment so they can act

accordingly. The UNEP and SOPAC EnVI has collected data from five Pacific countries, Fiji, Samoa, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Australia, covering the three main aspects of vulnerability: hazards, resistance and damage (Briguglio, 2003, pp. 12-13; UNEP, 2002a, pp. 2-10; UNEP & SOPAC, 2005, p. 8). This EnVI is claimed to be the first index to focus on environmental management (UNEP & SOPAC, 2005, p. 3). The indices used in this EnVI may also be useful for SIDS in other regions.

UNDP put forward a special effort to produce a World Report on vulnerability to natural disasters and launched its first report, *A Global Report; Reducing Disaster Risk, A Challenge for Development* in 2004. This publication aims to inform countries and international development agencies about natural and environmental related issues so they can work with the communities in reducing economic, environmental, human, and social losses (UNDP, 2004, p. i).

Social vulnerability is an area still by and large neglected in vulnerability discourse, although related areas, such as the World Food Programme, working to address poverty, food and famine, have been covered to some extent. Health-related aspects are also slowly picking up, as international organisations, such as the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) and the Red Cross, have been working, especially in the areas of HIV/AIDS and drugs.

The general impression about vulnerability indicators revealed from the literature survey and field visits, is, firstly, that most of those developed at international and regional levels are focused on determining economic growth and its vulnerability. Secondly, they are mainly designed to determine criteria for the purpose of directing international aid. Vulnerability assessments carried out at national levels are aimed either as a reference for policy interventions in addressing problems or a fact sheet for seeking international aid. However, vulnerability indicators could also be effective tools to monitor and evaluate the socio-economic, environmental and political conditions of a society, if they are employed at the local level, incorporate governance issues and are genuinely used to solve the local problems. This appears to be a lacking area, which should conceptually be integrated into the context of vulnerability assessments.

Moreover, observations from the literature and field visits reveal that vulnerability assessments are carried out in isolation from elements of governance, which means they have little impact on policy interventions in terms of addressing the problems. This thesis, therefore, argues that the elements of governance should be integrated into vulnerability assessments, especially, in archipelagos, where governance is one of the greatest vulnerability factors of all.

3.6.5 Vulnerability and poverty: A close-knit relationship

Vulnerability has often been understood and used as a ‘substitute’ or synonym for poverty, because of its close association with poverty. This also may be due to the similar causal factors of each. However, it has been argued that vulnerability and poverty are two distinct phenomena (Chambers, 2006, p. 1; Moser, 1998, p. 3; Philip & Rayhan, 2004, p. 1; Swift, 2006, p. 41; UNDP, 2002, p. 5). Chambers (2006, p. 1) maintains that vulnerability does not mean lack or want, whereas poverty does. Vulnerability has been seen as a dynamic concept that allows changes. Moser (1998, p. 3) differentiates the two according to their nature of occurrence, regarding poverty as static and its “measures are fixed in time” whereas vulnerability is dynamic and “people move in and out of poverty” in vulnerability measures. However, though historically poverty has been seen as a static phenomenon, many agree that both vulnerability and poverty should be regarded as dynamic concepts (Philip & Rayhan, 2004, p. 1).

In addition, poverty and vulnerability literature show that both phenomena are caused by very similar interlocking factors, “each of which feeds off and exacerbates the others” (J. Clark, 1991, p. 18): such as poverty (a factor itself), physical weakness, smallness, insularity, isolation, geographical dispersion, vulnerability (a factor itself) and powerlessness (Armstrong & Read, 2004, p. 18; Briguglio, 2003; J. Clark, 1991). Smith (2005, pp. 2-3) lists six different forms of poverty: “hunger”, “pervasive poor health and early death”, “the loss of childhood”, “the denial of the right to a basic education”, “powerlessness”, and “awareness and fear of becoming destitute as a result of a shock or catastrophic event” which he categorises as vulnerability. The Asian Development Bank (2005, p. 5) remarks conclusively that a

focus on vulnerability analysis will identify constraints at local levels in relation to poverty reduction that may not be possible from a national level analysis. The Bank (ADB, 2005, p. 5) further notes that there is a need for an inclusive focus covering poor and non-poor who may become victims of a stress or shock in the future. In addition, human vulnerability is a condition caused by physical, social, economic and environmental factors (UNDP, 2004, p. 11). In general, poverty is one of the most significant causes of vulnerability to environmental threats because of the lower coping capacity among the poor than the rich (UNEP, 2002b, p. 303). One can, therefore, argue that poverty causes vulnerability and vice versa.

In fact, evidence confirms that the negative effects of disasters are greater on poor people than the rich. The *Global Disaster Report* (UNDP, 2004) reveals that disaster risk is considerably lower in high-income countries than in medium and low income countries, and countries with high human development represent 15 percent of the exposed population, having only 1.8 percent of the deaths. Addressing poverty, therefore, has long been the focus of development. Clark (1991, p. 23) envisages development as a process of “attacking the web of forces that cause poverty”. He (J. Clark, 1991, p. 17) further reiterates that the principal objectives of the development process must be the eradication of poverty and its underlying causes. Indeed, ‘good change’ cannot be achieved in isolation from economic growth, therefore, both ‘good change’ – attacking poverty and vulnerability – and economic growth should go hand in hand (Chambers, 2005, p. 186; J. Clark, 1991, p. 20; World Bank, 2000/2001). The above discussions show that vulnerability and poverty are close-knit phenomena and need to be addressed simultaneously.

3.7 Linking vulnerability to development and vice versa

Disasters are the aggregate result of natural and human-induced hazards and human vulnerability, which consequently lead to increasing vulnerability and poverty, causing adverse impacts on the entire development system. It is believed that development and disasters have vitally close and complex interaction and linkage and, therefore, a number of scholars and development practitioners have concluded that there is a need for an inclusive strategy that can be implemented simultaneously to address both these phenomena (McEntire, 1999, p. 193). UNDP’s global disaster

report (2004, pp. 21-23) identified some of the potentially positive and negative consequences of development and disaster risks and the relationship between the two. The report points out that, generally, disasters hamper development because of their twofold adverse impact: destruction of existing socio-economic systems and new demands of investment in reconstruction. In addition, the report argues that vulnerable groups at local levels experience the most severe impacts, pushing them further into poverty. In contrast to these negative impacts, the report also reveals the positive impacts of a disaster on socio-economy, in that a potential opportunity that might be created in the aftermath of a disaster or during the recovery process, such as in the aftermath of a forest fire, which may result in sufficient wood for local use or newly-cleared land to be developed.

The *Global Disaster Report* also identifies the potential positive and negative impacts of development on vulnerability. The report and other literature point out that empirical evidence shows that socio-economic development, on the one hand, can reduce the negative impact of disaster risks (McEntire, 2004, p. 193; UNDP, 2004, p. 23). On the other hand, sometimes socio-economic development may increase disaster risks, especially, when improperly planned or unsustainable. The *Global Disaster Report* suggests that it is important to consider three points in development planning in order to avoid increasing disaster risks: 1) generation of wealth to increase the basic level of human development, 2) distribution of wealth to enable even the poorest to overcome human vulnerability; and 3) controlling the externalities of wealth creation (waste, pollution, destruction of environment or human culture), to prevent the loss of the fundamental assets on which human life depends and gains meaning (UNDP, 2004, p. 23). The above findings indicate that development is vital to tackle vulnerability-and poverty-related issues in any society.

Similarly, disasters have been related to development for several reasons. Dayton-Johnson (2006, pp. 8-9) considers natural disasters as a development issue and relates disaster with poverty and development for five reasons, which are noteworthy here: 1) natural disasters occur disproportionately more often in developing countries, with a greater degree of destruction and losses; 2) natural disasters severely affect the poor, including states, communities, and individuals; 3) natural

disasters can halt and hamper economic growth, because of loss of current investment and demand for future investments on reconstruction, relief and rehabilitation; 4) natural disasters cause adverse impacts on people's well-being in general, and lead to the destruction and loss of individuals' and households' life savings and assets, in other words, entire livelihoods and shelter or all means and ends to live, and 5) natural disasters can be considered as a development issue because both international and national development policies can reduce the adverse impact of disasters on economic growth and welfare (Dayton-Johnson, 2006, pp. 8-9).

Nevertheless, it has been argued that disaster risks, and sometimes seasonal stresses, are not inevitable but can be reduced by creating resilience and management through appropriate development plans and policies (Dayton-Johnson, 2006, p. 11; UNDP, 2004, p. ii). For these reasons, McEntire (1999, p. 193) suggests that it is crucial to have an inclusive strategy for vulnerability reduction through development and disaster management programmes that incorporate a broad scope of variables. At the onset, it is vital to note that people's well-being can be sustained if development plans and policies are incorporated into all elements of livelihood sustainability, which will eventually empower and enhance people's ability to cope with and recover from disaster risks and seasonal stresses. Chambers and Conway (1991, pp. 10-11) suggest that any definition of livelihood sustainability should include the capacity to avoid, cope with, and recover from stresses and shocks, arguing that "sustainable livelihoods are those that can avoid or resist such stresses and shocks" enabling them "to bounce back". For this reason they argue that the concept of sustainable livelihoods encompasses capability, equity and sustainability paradigms for development thinking (Chambers & Conway, 1991, pp. 3-4).

In a similar vein, Bohle, Downing and Watts (1994, p. 39) maintain that vulnerability approaches should identify historically and socially created choices and constraints. This would allow authorities to determine the elements of vulnerability, exposure, and ability to cope with and recover from any potential risks. Further they elaborate that it is all about people's rights over "resources and basic necessities", and "social entitlements" (Bohle, et al., 1994, p. 39). This discussion demonstrates that

sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and rights to resources and basic necessities are the fundamental elements of people's ability to deal with shocks and stresses.

3.8 Conclusion: Linking governance and development to vulnerability reduction

The previous sections show that a people-centred responsive governance system which is interactive and cohesive and brings together all stakeholders of the development action, has the potential to reduce vulnerability effectively. In summary, this chapter has discussed governance, covering some of its uses, models, and indices used to measure performance and how the concept has emerged into the international development arena. The discussions about governance have shown that there is no consensus definition or model that can be applied universally as a remedy for the socio-economic problems of a nation. Rather governance should be customised according to the place, its geographic nature, and cultural norms and values. Although there are differences in the definitions based on the objectives of individuals, institutions and nations, the fundamental elements of governance by and large remain the same, that people are the cornerstone.

In the same manner, vulnerability and its related issues have been reviewed, covering some of the meanings, types, and indices used to assess its impact on a state and society. The literature survey has shown that there is no agreed definition of vulnerability. However, the key elements recurring in socio-economic and environmental vulnerability discussions are shocks, exposure and resilience. Based on the discussions about vulnerability, this thesis maintains that SIDs are more vulnerable than large continental states and, in particular, small archipelagic states are even more exposed to socio-economic and environmental vulnerability. Then concepts, such as development, civil society and poverty were discussed to illustrate the linkages with governance and vulnerability. The importance of strong and effective governance and empowering society as whole was stressed in order to bring positive development progress to a nation and to reduce vulnerability and poverty.

Mainly it was argued that vulnerabilities can be reduced by establishing appropriate governance systems, which will eventually create opportunities, solve problems, and secure a sustainable livelihood to empower communities and enhance their well-being. The thesis has also sought to demonstrate the concept of development as something which goes beyond economic growth. More importantly, development should be regarded as an inclusive concept comprising economic growth and societal aspects, with special focus on people's well-being. Vulnerability reduction should be a coexisting vision and mission within the system of governance and development actions, especially in small archipelagic states. These three development concepts, economic growth, social development and people's well-being, should be considered concurrently with governance as they are phenomena, which, in isolation, will become a barrier to the achievement of others. The next chapter will discuss 'vulnerability,' and the role of governance in addressing vulnerability-related issues, in the context of the Maldives.

Chapter 4

Vulnerability in the Context of the Maldives: the Role of Governance in Reducing Vulnerability

4.1 Introduction

In chapter three the literature survey discussed ‘governance and vulnerability in a development context,’ while showing their linkages and interconnections with the concepts of poverty, development and civil society.

This chapter opens with a brief geographical and historical background of the Maldives. Following this is a discussion about governance and the vulnerability of the archipelago in a development context, which covers institutional frameworks, socio-economic conditions, physical infrastructure, and involvement of the civil society in addressing societal problems. It will also highlight some of the policy measures taken in order to enhance the governance system and reduce the vulnerability and poverty of the most disadvantaged groups, especially the outer island communities. The discussions in the chapter are mainly based on secondary data on the Maldives, supported by the arguments and discussions from the primary data collected during the researcher’s field visit to the archipelago. The discussions in this chapter emerge from a consideration of two key questions:

- How effectively is ‘governance’ institutionalised to reduce vulnerability and how important is it to the socio-economic development of the country and well being of the people?
- What are the differences between the livelihoods of remote communities and their wellbeing and that of communities at the centre or closer to the centre?

In addition, the discussions also touch upon some issues contained in the other research questions, in particular;

- What are the most vulnerable areas in small island states?
- What are the socio-economic and political causes of vulnerability in these states?

- How does governance impact on vulnerabilities?

Ultimately, the discussion will address the governance system, institutions, and policies in the Maldives and how effectively they have addressed the issues linked to its communities' wellbeing and how successful they have been in reducing the vulnerability of its island communities. It also intends to discuss the issues of disparities between urban and rural communities.

4.2 The Maldives

The Republic of Maldives is a necklace-shaped archipelago with an estimated land area of 300 square kilometres (MPND, 2007b). The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the archipelago covers around 859,000 square kilometres of ocean (MPND, 2004a, 2007b). The nearest neighbours are Sri Lanka some 600kms to the east and India about 670kms to the north (MPHRE, 1997a, 1997b), see Figure 4.1: Maldives Map. The Maldives consists of 1,192 scattered islands, 196 inhabited and 996 uninhabited (2006 Census)¹⁰, forming 26 natural atolls which are separated by large channels (MPND, 2004a, 2007e). These atolls have been grouped into 20 atolls for administrative purposes. Despite this, although the southernmost atolls have differences in dialect, Maldives' society is unified by the common language (Dhivehi) and its script (Thaana), religion (Islam) and culture (MPND, 2004a, 2007d).

The Maldives has only been occupied by foreign powers for brief periods throughout its recorded history, the longest when the country was invaded in the mid-sixteenth century by a Portuguese garrison based in *Goa* (India), after which the Portuguese ruled the country for almost 15 years, 1558 to 1573 (MPHRE, 1997a; MPND, 2004a). The occupation came to an end in 1573 as a result of guerrilla warfare waged against the Portuguese by an island chief known as Boduthakurufaanu of Utheemu island,

¹⁰ The 2006 Census figures show that there has been somewhat of an impact, though slow, of the government's "Population Consolidation" policy in reducing the numbers of inhabited islands. The slow pace is, perhaps, due to its ineffectiveness and lack of political commitment. According to the Census there were 202 inhabited islands in 1985, 201 islands in 1995 and 200 islands in 2000. The changes in numbers of inhabited islands are as a result of resettling and consolidating some of the smaller island communities to larger islands.

from the Northernmost atolls, and his compatriots (MPND, 2004a). The country became a British protectorate from 1887 to 1965 under an agreement signed between the British and the Maldives. During this protectorate period the British were not involved in the internal affairs of the country (MPHRE, 1997a; MPND, 2004a). Nevertheless, the Maldives marked independence in 1965, which it considered the return of full sovereignty following the end of the British protectorate period.

According to the 2006 Census, the total population of the country is 298,968 plus 54,000 foreigners, mainly from countries in the region like Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, working in the country (MPND, 2007a, 2007e).

Some 35 percent of the total population, 103,693 people, live on Malé, the national capital, and its remote island suburbs, Villingili and Hulhumalé, in a total land area of about 4.2 square kilometres¹¹ (MPND, 2007b). The remaining population live on the 195 scattered outer-islands. Around 48 per cent of these islands have less than 500 inhabitants and 21 percent have a population of 600 to 1,000 (MPND, 2007e). My observation is that, on the majority of these islands, the inhabitants are concentrated in the most accessible areas in the vicinity of the shoreline.

The inhabited islands of the Maldives range in size from the 5.7 square kilometres of *Gan* island in Laamu atoll to the 0.05 square kilometres of Hathifushi island in Haa Alifu atoll. More than 60 percent of these inhabited islands have a land area of less than a half square kilometre (MPND, 2007e). Some 33 of these islands have an area of more than a square kilometre and only three are larger than three square kilometres (MPND, 2004a, 2007e). In general, these low-lying islands of the Maldives have a flat terrain and more than 80 percent have an elevation of less than one metre above sea level (MPND, 2004a). The highest point above sea level has been identified as 2.4 metres, an area of an uninhabited island, Villingli, in the southernmost atoll, Seenu (CIA, n.d.).

Fisheries and tourism account for more than a third of total employment. Agricultural activities are restricted because of poor soil and limited cultivable land. The country depends on imports for food, consumable goods and all necessities. The country also lacks natural resources and proper socio-economic infrastructure. Due to this, the country is extremely vulnerable to external shocks and development is challenged because of high unit costs and vulnerability to natural disasters.

¹¹ Malé has a land area of 193.18 hectares with a population of 92,555, Villingili has a land area of 33.1 hectares with a population of 6,956 and Hulhumalé has 193.3 hectares with only 2,866 inhabitants. Villingili was an uninhabited island used as a tourist resort in the 1980s in a distance of 2.8km from Malé. The government has developed the island as the fifth ward of the capital Malé to accommodate the growth of Malé population and solve the housing problems. Hulhumalé is an artificial island in the reef of Hulhulé-Farukolhufushi, 5.3km from Malé, reclaimed under the Hulhumalé Land Reclamation and Development Project which began in 2002 to address the growing congestion and housing problem of Malé (MPND, 2004a, 2007e).

4.3 Governance and its institutional structure

Historically, the Maldives had a traditional sultanate or monarchy system until its abolition in 1968, three years after independence, by achieving full sovereignty from British protectorate (The President's Office of the Maldives, 2007, p. 3). At that time, the Maldives declared itself to be “a sovereign, independent democratic republic based on the principles of Islam” following a unitary state system (Republic of Maldives, 1998, p. 1). Until now, it has applied a mixed British-American form of management with a home-grown style of governance, (MPND, 2004a, p. 29), in which all authorities are centralised. Local affairs at atoll and island levels are administered by centrally appointed staff, island and atoll chiefs, magistrates, teachers and health officials. Under this system, the head of both state and the government is a president who is nominated and elected for a term of five years by the People’s Majlis, the Parliament, in a secret ballot and then confirmed by a public referendum (Republic of Maldives, 1998, pp. 7-8). The President appoints and dismisses cabinet ministers, the Attorney General and other judiciary bodies, and the Auditor General.

Under the current Constitution, the People’s Majlis is comprised of 50 legislative members, 2 members representing each of the 20 administrative atolls and the national capital island, Malé, and eight presidential members (Republic of Maldives, 1998, p. 21). The 42 members representing the atolls and Malé are elected by popular vote for a five year term and the eight presidential members are appointed by the president.

In June 2005, the government introduced a multi-party political system through a motion passed by the People’s Majlis. The Majlis has also passed a Bill to review the current constitution to accommodate intended political reforms designed to enhance the democratic governance and allow the country to operate constitutionally, by incorporating all necessary amendments into the constitution. Consequently, the Majlis called for an assembly of the People’s Special Majlis, which is the authoritative body for constitutional review and amendments. While the Constitution is being reviewed, on 18 August 2007 a public referendum took place in order to determine whether the Constitution should follow a presidential or parliamentary

governance system. According to the result announced by the government, more than 60 percent of the voters supported a presidential system. At the political level, all the then-registered political parties, Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP), Islamic Democratic Party (IDP), Adhaalathu and Maldives Social Democratic Party (MSDP), with the exception of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), supported a presidential system, arguing that it is more appropriate than a parliamentary system for a small country like the Maldives.

This means that the revised Constitution will follow a presidential system. Discussions are ongoing at the Majlis and Special Majlis, and political level, but it is anticipated that the system will be enhanced with more democratic values and elements by separating the three powers of state, executive, legislative and judiciary. It is also expected that the new Constitution will include more empowered overseeing bodies for the system or “watch dogs”, such as an independent Auditor General and Ombudsman. Moreover, the government has proposed a decentralised local government system as part of the reform agenda, to be included the new Constitution.

At the moment, the Maldives has a centralised government and only a one tier governance system, as articulated in the current Constitution (MPND, 2004a, p. 21; Republic of Maldives, 1998, p. 1). Therefore, it does not practise a local government system per se, as understood in contemporary governance systems. At the local level, both atoll and island, centrally-appointed administrators work as sole agents and undertake the day-to-day managerial work. From personal observation and knowledge, the researcher notes that, generally, there are only five government agencies involved at the atoll level (Atoll Office, Atoll School and Atoll Education Centre, Hospital and Police Service Centre), and four agencies at the island level (Island Office, Island Court, Health Centre or Health Post, and at least one Primary School). The Atoll Offices are located on the capital islands of every atoll. In addition to these, health services are provided at the regional level through Regional Hospitals. Almost all atolls have at least one educational centre where higher secondary education is provided. In the more remote Southernmost and Northernmost Regions, a Southern and a Northern Secondary School serve the

closest atolls. Generally, all planning and policy formation occurs at central government in the capital city of Malé regardless of whether they concern islands, atolls or national matters. Although judicial, health, and educational issues are generally dealt with directly by their respective central authorities, the Ministry of Atolls Development (MoAD) is the focal point for all central agencies regarding local matters.

4.3.1 Existing institutional framework for the atolls

The MoAD has overall responsibility for administration of local affairs on the atolls where two thirds of the population live. In general, the MoAD is responsible for socio-economic development of the islands and atolls as well as their administrative affairs, for instance, land management of the islands, facilitating and developing infrastructure, human resource development and resettlement programmes, including the security and peace of atoll communities (MPND, 2004a, p. 21). The Ministry formulates plans, coordinates, implements, and monitors most of the development policies and projects (MPHRE, 1997a).

An atoll chief appointed by the president of the country is in charge of the atoll office. Once appointed, the atoll chief is accountable to the MoAD and dismissed by the Minister of the MoAD¹². The atoll office is responsible for the islands covered within the constituency of each respective atoll. Each inhabited island has an island office, which is headed by an island chief who is accountable to the atoll chief. Every atoll office and island office is provided with a number of staff, depending on the size of the atoll and island population (MPND, 2004a, p. 21). Each island has an Island Court staffed by a magistrate, secretary, clerk and labourer. The Island Court normally deals directly with the Ministry of Justice, though the Court coordinates its work with the Island Office. Health service at the island level is provided by a Health Post or Health Centre. Most staff have modest educational backgrounds – although this is now gradually changing. To do their work without support from central government agencies requires wide range of skills. Where this is not available, their

¹² From my personal observation, so far, there has been only one female Atoll Chief, however, there are many female Island Chiefs or Assistant Island Chiefs and one Deputy Atoll Chief.

role is limited to maintaining law and order, registering and maintaining basic statistics, allocating housing plots and cooperating in development activities.

Over the past few decades, government has established development committees, Atoll Development Committees (ADCs) and Island Development Committees (IDCs), to assist and advise the atoll and island chiefs in island and atoll development programmes. In addition, every island has an Island Women's Development Committee (IWDC) that works especially for the wellbeing and development of its girls and women (MoGF, 2007). The ADC consists of members from IDCs, WDCs and individuals from other socio-economic sectors within the constituency of the atoll, selected by the atoll chief. Practically, most of these selected members also happen to be island chiefs and they meet once in a month at the atoll capital (MPND, 2004a, p. 22). The ADC is chaired by the atoll chief or whoever is in charge of the atoll office at the time of the meeting, such as the deputy or senior assistant or assistant atoll chief.

The IDC is made up of members elected by the people of the respective island or appointed by the atoll chief for a term of two years. The number of members varies based on the population of the island. The president of the committee is the island chief, who also chairs the committee. Under the current reform agenda, the government intends to replace these two committees, ADC and IDC, with Atoll and Island Councils composed of entirely elected members who will be the administrative authorities responsible for development of the islands and atolls. Already, the law has been formulated and submitted to the legislative bodies for approval. Once the law is implemented and Councils are elected, atoll and island affairs will be run by these councils using a decentralised local government mechanism (MoAD, 2007).

The IWDCs consists of members elected by the women of the respective communities; men can also be members if they are willing to stand as candidates and are elected¹³. However, male members do not have the right to vote or be either

¹³ I found male members actively involved in some of the IWDCs in islands I visited.

president or vice president of the committee. In general, the members of the IDC and IWDC are volunteers who wish to participate in island and community development activities. Nevertheless, until now, almost all policies have been formulated by the central government and implemented at atoll level. The procedural chain is shown in Figure 4.2:

4.4 Socio-economic conditions

Socio-economic development is the yardstick used by governments and international agencies to measure the performance of any individual, family, society and country as well as their wellbeing. In most cases, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is used to assess economic growth and its progress. Social development is measured using the status of social services and their infrastructure and accessibility, such as education, health, electricity, water and sanitation, transport and communications. Accordingly, this section examines the economy, education and health status of the Maldives.

4.4.1 Economy

Fisheries and tourism are the major sources of foreign exchange earnings and government revenue in the archipelago, and account for more than a third of total employment. Although agriculture has been an important means of survival for some of the island communities, it is very limited because of poor soil and lack of cultivable land. The country, therefore, depends on imports for staples, such as rice, sugar and flour, and other necessities, for example, construction materials and oil. Due to this, the country is extremely vulnerable to external shocks. However, the archipelago, known as a ‘paradise on the earth’, has enormous marine resources and natural beauty, white coral, clean sandy beaches, crystal-clear lagoons and uncontaminated sea water. These natural characteristics and beauty have made the archipelago a popular and attractive tourist destination.

The archipelago has been experiencing a growing economy in the recent decades – 1987 to 2006 – at an average rate of seven percent per year, and has made remarkable socio-economic progress (MPND, 2004b, 2007d). The country’s GDP per capita has steadily been increasing from about US\$400 in 1977 to nearly US\$1,700 in 1997, to more than US\$2,400 in 2004 and US\$2,674 in 2006 (MPND, 2004b, 2007d). Although in the aftermath of the Asian tsunami, 26 December 2004, growth declined to 4.6 percent in 2005, the growth rate recovered to reach a high of 19.1 percent in 2006 and strong economic growth is expected over the period of 2006 to 2010 (MPND, 2007d). Expansion and improvement of the tourism and fisheries industries play a significant role in economic growth.

National statistics estimate that tourism contributed some 27 percent of GDP, about 51 percent of foreign currency earnings, and more than 33 percent of government revenues in 2006 (MPND, 2007a, 2007d). Since the first resort was established in 1972, tourism has expanded enormously and, by the end of 2006, there were 89 resort islands covering 11 atolls, with 17,800 beds (MoTCA, 2007; MPND, 2007a). As of December 2006, the Maldives had a total capacity of 20,500 registered tourist beds, including 116 live-onboard safari vessels with 1,599 beds; 9 hotels of 713 beds; and 21 guest houses with 391 beds (MPND, 2007d, p. 71). Of the resorts, 72 are located in the central region in the vicinity of the national capital Malé (43 in Malé Atoll, 16 in Alifu Dhaalu Atoll, 11 in Alifu Alifu Atoll and two in Vaavu Atoll) and most of the remainder are in the North and South Central regions (MoTCA, 2007). The northernmost region has only one resort and the southernmost atolls none. However, the government has currently initiated a new strategic policy to expand tourism throughout the country, covering all atolls, in order to give fair opportunities to all citizens by bringing tourism closer to the people. As a result, a number of potential islands for tourism have been identified across the country and, of these, more than a dozen have already been leased for development as resorts. To my knowledge, some of these islands are in the final stages of preparation to be launched soon.

Nonetheless, despite the apparent advantages of promoting tourism, I found some critics among my fieldwork informants, especially about the policy of targeting large numbers of uninhabited islands that could potentially be used for other industrial purposes. Critiques also included arguments in favour of a more diversified economy, because tourism is highly sensitive to international shocks, and focusing long-term investment on one sector could make the national economy very fragile and vulnerable. For example, following the Asian tsunami, 26th December 2004, the Maldivian tourism industry experienced a sharp drop in the numbers of tourists in 2005 and, consequently, a steep fall in economic growth. In a similar vein, a slowdown and temporary decline in the tourist industry was observed in 2001 in the aftermath of 9/11.

These drops are very clearly documented in Figures 4.3 and 4.4. Figure 4.3 shows patterns of tourist arrivals in the Maldives from 1979 to 2006 and Figure 4.4 illustrates GDP and GDP growth rates from 1990 to 2006.

Of course, the rapid change in the pattern of growth in 2006 shows fast recovery from the adverse impact of the tsunami, but this uncertainty and vulnerability to shocks should be taken into consideration in development planning. A more diversified economy might not be so affected and would increase economic resilience to internal and external shocks.

Over the same period, the fisheries sector also has seen tremendous industrial and technological changes, for example, shifting from traditional sailing vessels to mechanised vessels using modern fishing equipment, and the introduction of modern fish processing: freezing and canning. It is worthwhile noting here that the Maldivians maintain pole and line fishing for subsistence and commercial fisheries, despite great advances in the use of modern technology in the industry. As the result of technological advancement, the fish catch tripled and exports of marine products increased from 18,000 to about 129,000 tons between 1977 and 2005 (MPND, 2004b, 2007e). However, although fishing is vitally important for the livelihoods of a vast majority of the Maldivians, especially for outer-island communities, its contribution to the GDP has been declining ever since tourism was introduced. In 2006, the fisheries sector contributed only 6 percent to GDP, whereas, in 1990, its contribution was 11 percent of GDP and 11 percent of net employment (MPND, 2007a). Traditionally, for a vast majority of the outer-island population, commercial and subsistence fishing has provided the main means of employment and much of their nutrition (MPND, 2004a).

In recent times however, people have found employment in resorts easier and more relaxed than fishing, with wages that are fixed and reliable. Moreover, there is unwillingness on the part of school graduates to work in the fisheries sector and there is more prestige associated with employment in tourism and other white-color jobs. This has led to high level of rural-urban migration, causing congestion in Malé and huge social problems, such as increased drug abuse and petty crime. The consequences of this have been an increase in family problems in both Malé and the atolls.

As previously mentioned, in the past fishing was the main source of livelihood for the vast majority of the island population. Most of my fieldwork informants in the Maldives felt strongly that fisheries should continue to be given priority in government planning and developed at both subsistence and commercial levels to reduce socio-economic vulnerability. They also expressed the opinion that there was a need for introducing new types of fishing and products, rather than relying solely on tuna and reef fisheries.

Recently, the government has changed its policy, allowing the private sector into the fisheries industry, thereby breaking the state monopoly. However, it seems that, if the demands of those in the fisheries sector are to be met, more work needs to be done in order to develop this pivotal industry.

As well as fishing, traditionally, agriculture has also been a source of survival for some of the island communities and some still depend on agricultural products as a means of livelihood, in terms of both dietary intake and income. However, agricultural activities remain very limited due to the lack of cultivable land. The total available agricultural land is estimated as less than 30 square kilometres (MPND, 2007d). As a consequence, and as already mentioned, 90 percent of the nation's food needs, especially staples such as rice, sugar, and wheat flour (MPND, 2007d), are met by imports. This makes the archipelago's food security vulnerable. Given the fragmented and scattered nature of many isolated islands, which rely on coastal shipping and incur additional costs for handling and transport, food security is especially vulnerable. The Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment II (VPAII) (MPND, 2004b) report prepared by the Maldives' government found that seven percent of the island population identified food shortages as one of their problems. According to the VPAII (MPND, 2004b), about half the people had experienced minor food crises lasting about 10 days and one third of these affected people experienced such shortages five or more times a year. Although not as bad as in the past (in 1997, 14 percent of the people experienced such shortages), it does show that this is an ongoing problem. The report identifies food shortages due to lack of money rather than shortfalls in the commercial availability of food (MPND, 2004b). Moreover, some of those whom I interviewed, both individuals and groups, raised the same issue and thought more attention should be given to agriculture. Almost all islands I visited in Raa and Shaviyani atolls identified agricultural activities that should be promoted as part of their own Island Development Plans (IDPs). Even communities that do not have land for agricultural activities wanted their plans, at least, to promote home-gardening or lease nearby uninhabited islands which they could farm.

In fact, current national statistics (MPND, 2007d) show that agricultural activities and products are increasing. This increase appears to be the result of government policy. The government has started long-term leasing of uninhabited islands for commercial farming; recently, 32 islands have been leased for a period of 21 years. In 2004, these islands yielded about 1,111 metric tons of agricultural products (MPND, 2007d). Moreover, due to the expansion of tourism there is more demand for agricultural products than ever before. Maldivians are also more aware of the importance of the vegetables and fruit for their diet. As a result, the popularity of home-gardening is increasing and some 75 percent of inhabited islands are involved in some kind of agricultural activities (MPND, 2007d). This clearly suggests that agriculture can be further developed at both subsistence and commercial levels on the islands of the Maldives, which could reduce, to some extent, the huge dependency on imported food.

The Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment II (VPA II) Survey carried out at a national level in 2004 reports that, while the national economy has been growing steadily during the survey periods – VPA I¹⁴ and VPA II –, per capita household income has also improved tremendously, with an annual growth rate of more than six percent: about five percent in the atolls and eight percent in Malé (MPND, 2004b). According to the VPA II report (2004), the daily per capita median¹⁵ household income was Rufiyaa¹⁶ (Rf) 26 (US \$2.02) in the country, Rf 49 (US \$3.81) in Malé and Rf 21 (US \$1.63) in the atolls (MPND, 2004b, p. 43). However, when Rufiya values, which are used in nominal terms in the report, are translated in terms of Purchasing Power Parities (PPPs) for international comparison, then per capita incomes are about \$PPP 7.60 in the country, \$PPP 12.30 in Malé and \$PPP 5.60 in the atolls (MPND, 2004b). For a clear understanding of the situation, see Table 4.1, which presents the daily per capita median household income of Maldives, Malé and the atolls in nominal (in Rf and US \$) and PPPs terms:

¹⁴ VPA I was carried out in 1997.

¹⁵ Median household income refers to “the income where half of the population has less and half of the population has more than this” (MPND, 2004b, p. 43).

¹⁶ Maldivian currency. Current (March 2008) exchange rate is Rufiyaa 12.85 to US \$ 1.

Table 4. 1: Daily per capita median household income of Maldives, Malé and the atolls in nominal and PPPs terms			
Locality	Daily per capita median household income		
	Nominal		PPPs US \$
	Rufiya	US \$	
Maldives	26	2.02	7.60
Malé	49	3.81	12.30
Atolls	21	1.63	5.60
Source: data from (MPND, 2004b)			

These findings illustrate the increasing income inequalities and disparities between Malé and the atolls, even though, according to the report, inequalities are declining within Malé and the atolls themselves (MPND, 2004b). Nevertheless, the disparity and inequality between Malé and the atolls is, by and large, increasing because, until very recently, socio-economic infrastructure development has been mainly concentrated on the central region. This has influenced the atoll population to migrate to Malé and its surrounding areas, seeking opportunities such as jobs, education and health services.

4.4.2 Education

The provision of basic socio-economic and physical infrastructure to about 200 island communities, geographically fragmented and scattered throughout the country over a vast area, is enormously challenging and costly. In such a situation, the unit cost of infrastructure can be four times higher than in a continental nation, because each community has to be provided with separate units of infrastructure and services. It is understood that it is the Maldives' government's responsibility to provide its people with the basic socio-economic services necessary for their survival and wellbeing, regardless of their size, class and geographic location, as part of their fundamental rights as citizens. In fact, provision of more advanced and specialised services, such as secondary or higher secondary schools and hospitals, to relatively small communities 'would be prohibitively expensive'. Therefore, the inhabitants in smaller islands should opt for and accept alternatives, such as provision of access to the services that can be made available at a central place equidistant to all communities (MPND, 2004b). However, in the 1970s and 1980s, most of the small island communities hardly had access to basic services, such as education and health. This had been the case in almost all islands visited in the course of the fieldwork,

though now each of them has at least a primary level school and a Health Section. For example, on the researcher's home island, until the early 1980s, there was no formal education and, until very recently, no basic health service. Now it has a well furnished secondary school which provides education up to grade 10, and a health post. The school¹⁷ is an endowment made by a philanthropist businessman from the same island; otherwise the island would not meet the criteria to be eligible for a well-provided primary school.

Since education plays a major role in poverty alleviation and vulnerability reduction in any society, let me present a broad picture of the education sector in the Maldives. Over the past years, the Maldives has established a national public education system with a common curriculum for grades one to seven (MPND, 2007d). According to VPA II (MPND, 2004b), by 2004, all inhabited islands had primary schools, regardless of their quality or provision of necessities and furniture. Recently, the government of the Maldives was proud to announce it had achieved its policy of 'universal primary education for all' and currently aims to achieve 10 years of universal basic education for all by 2010 (MPND, 2007d). Under this policy the government changed 135 community schools into government schools in 2005 alone (MPND, 2007e). Eventually, the children of these schools will have better facilities and quality education because most of the community schools have always faced resource constraints in terms of funding, teachers and facilities. The government schools provide free education whereas the community schools sometimes charged nominal fees to cover operational costs and teachers' salaries. Education in private schools is not free, in most cases. By 2006, there were 349 schools in the country (see Table 4.2). Of these, 187 schools cater for grades 1-10, while 22 schools cater for grade 1-12. However, eighty percent of schools lack basic teaching and learning resources and facilities. Seventy five percent of secondary school teachers are expatriates, and only 184 schools have supervisors or trained headmasters (MPND, 2007d).

¹⁷ The state pays the salaries of some teachers and other expenses based on the common criteria. The school is run by the same philanthropist.

Table 4.2: Student enrolment and numbers of schools in Male' and atolls by type of educational institution, 2006						
Locality	Student enrolment and numbers of schools by institution					
	Government		Community		Private	
	schools	enrolment	Schools	enrolment	schools	enrolment
Maldives	222	82,177	48	9,691	79	8,373
Malé	13	19,760	4	6,532	5	3,053
Atolls	209	62,417	44	3,159	74	5,320
Source: Data from (MPND, 2007e)						

Education remains one of the major concerns of island communities, especially quality of education. The fieldwork data show that the majority of parents are still concerned about the difficulties in obtaining secondary education for their children, mainly for two reasons. First, most of the parents state that they cannot afford to send their children to places where secondary education is available within the atoll or Malé, due to the high costs and fear for their children's security due to increasing drug abuse and violent crimes, especially in the urban or semi-urban islands. Second, even if they manage to send their children, parents feel their children might struggle because of the poor quality primary education on their own islands. This is the reason why the Maldives has achieved a net enrolment ratio of 100 percent for girls and boys at the primary level, but only 64.6 percent for girls and 7.2 percent for boys at secondary level (MPND, 2007d), see Table 4.3, which presents student enrolment by levels of education and sex, in 2006.

Table 4.3: Student enrolment by levels of education and sex in 2006								
Locality	Enrolments by levels of education							
	Pre-primary		Primary (Grades 1-7)		Lower secondary (Grades 8-10)		Higher secondary (Grades 11-12)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Maldives	7,316	7,009	28,618	26,074	14,029	14,937	1,160	996
Malé	2,525	2,410	7,028	6,611	4,281	4,951	727	716
Atolls	4,791	4,599	21,590	19,463	9,748	9,986	433	280
Source: Data from (MPND, 2007e).								

Availability of trained teachers and adequate resources are the main challenge in achieving a quality education system. According to the VPA II (MPND, 2004b),

there was an increase in the numbers of trained teachers and resources provided to the schools in the atolls. This has certainly improved the quality of education. However, there remains “high proportion of untrained teachers at primary level, and heavy reliance on expatriate teachers at secondary level” (MPND, 2007d). Besides this schools are under equipped. These are the main hindrances to achieving the policy (MPND, 2007d). The national statistics show that 75 percent of secondary teachers are expatriates who do not stay long in the atolls which are poorly provided with basic services (MPND, 2007d). Therefore, retention of foreign, as well as local teachers, in the atolls remains a problem.

The other major challenge is the provision of university or higher education to an increasing number of school graduates every year. Last year alone there were some 4000 high school leavers wanting to embark on tertiary education. However, the Maldives does not have a university. Parents who can afford it send their children abroad. Other high school graduates must either wait for a scholarship to go abroad for university education or enter the workforce immediately. The government announced its intention to establish a university sometime ago but it has yet to be accomplished. In recent years, however, the government has taken some steps by creating a College of Higher Education and a few faculties under the College.

4.4.3 Health

Accessibility to healthcare services is another vital aspect of peoples’ lives and wellbeing. Access to improved healthcare would certainly off-set some of the impacts of poverty and vulnerability: timely treatment would enable people to avoid loss of earnings. Provision of a good healthcare service to some 200 geographically fragmented communities would be a highly expensive and challenging task for any country and even more challenging for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), like the Maldives, which are highly dependent on external aid. However, since it is a necessity for the wellbeing of any society and its people, healthcare cannot be overlooked. Governments must do their best within the limits of their resources to provide basic services.

As a matter of fact, the health policy of the government of the Maldives aims to create equal accessibility to primary healthcare for all citizens. The policy argument is that “health services shall be provided without discrimination on account of the person’s gender or socio-economic status and should be affordable to all, especially the poor and disadvantaged” (MPND, 2007e, p. 144). In order to achieve the national health policy, the government has established a five tier institutional mechanism—central, regional, atoll, sub-atoll and island level services—engaging a centralised hierarchical system of administration (MOH, 2004). The healthcare is provided through a fashion of vertical referrals within the five tiers of the services starting from the lowest one, the island health post or health section, through to the central hospital. However, patients are free to seek services from any of these tiers (MOH, 2004). Apart from the public health facilities, there is also a tertiary private hospital in Malé and some private clinics in Malé, but few in the atolls.

There are six regional hospitals in six strategic points of the country, offering curative services with some major specialties. In 2006, the regional hospitals were staffed with 57 doctors, 95 staff nurses and 108 nurses beside other technical and administrative staff: see Table 4.4 (MOH, 2004; MPND, 2007e). There are 13 atoll hospitals (covering all the atolls except those where the six regional hospitals are located and Malé atoll, which has the Central hospital), which provide curative services with minor specialties: see Table 4.4. According to Table 4.4, some of the Health Centres still do not have doctors and only a few Health Posts are provided with doctors and nurses. As a general policy Health Centres and Health Posts are staffed by community or family health workers, trained birth attendants and midwives. In 2006, there were 207 Community health workers, 341 family health workers and 334 trained traditional birth attendants (MPND, 2007e).

Table 4.4: Description of five tiers of public healthcare mechanism and provided services by 2006					
Five tiers of healthcare system		No. of units available	Doctors and nurses available		Types of services provided
			Doctors	Nurses	
1	Central Hospital, at central level, in Male'	1	160	868	major tertiary referral hospital
2	Regional Hospitals, at regional level	6	57	203	curative services for their respective regions with some major specialties, outreach services for atoll hospitals and Health centres, and supervision of these institutes
3	Atoll Hospitals, at atoll level,	13	54	192	curative services with minor specialties such as obstetric and gynecological, and laboratory services
4	Health Centres, at sub-atoll level	89	77	232	very basic curative services and are staffed with by a general doctor, Community health worker, few nurses and administrators. Some centres have laboratory and blood transfusion services.
5	Health Posts/ Health units, at island level	34 health posts and some 53 islands have health units	8	9	preventive care and maternal and child health services. Health Posts and units are generally staffed by a Family Health Worker and Trained Birth Attendant.
Source: (MOH, 2004; MPND, 2007e)					

As can be seen from these figures, still there are some 53 inhabited islands without adequate space and facilities to provide basic healthcare. The healthcare is provided in these islands from health units run as annexes of the island office. For example, half the inhabited islands in Raa atoll (one of my fieldwork sites in the Maldives), seven out of the 14 (excluding Kandholhudhoo, where the island community was entirely displaced after the Asian tsunami), have health units with only a family or community health worker, as do five islands in the Shaviyani atoll (my second fieldwork site).

Significant improvements in the health sector have been documented in the most recent survey, VPA II (MPND, 2004b). Since 1997 many more islands now have clinics, health posts and health centres and medical staff. It is also reported, however, that many smaller island communities still face problems in terms of access to basic health services, extended absences of health personnel and lack of medical supplies (MPND, 2004b). Indeed, much more could be done to improve the healthcare sector

if a more demanding mechanism was put in place to make the local government the employer. This would add a political dimension to the provision of an accountable service.

4.5 Physical infrastructure

The description above provides a profile of the Maldives and its socio-economic conditions which stresses the importance of provision of a physical infrastructure to the island communities of the archipelago. Two-thirds of the country's population live scattered across 195 islands. The cost and challenge of providing a basic infrastructure is clear. How can archipelagic states address poverty and vulnerability issues and introduce sound systems of governance in a well-coordinated and participatory manner? How do they promote developments in which all these geographically fragmented communities can equally share? Accessibility to good physical infrastructure provides a measure of the quality of people's lives as well as their standard of living, covering an enormous range of public services and facilities. Provision of electricity would increase the socio-economic productivity of these island communities, while enhancing the availability of transport and improving communication networks would breakdown isolation. Some of the main characteristics of the physical infrastructure of the Maldives will now be briefly described, especially those aspects which play an important role in people's lives.

4.5.1 Electricity

Hardly any economy can run without electricity, and socio-economic infrastructures, such as healthcare facilities and educational institutions, would find it difficult to function. Some two or so decades ago, the vast majority of Maldivians used a traditional oil lamp to light their houses at night and manual instruments in their work. Now, as the world has changed and advanced technology has become common place, the availability of electricity translates into an essential component of people's wellbeing. It has enabled island communities to increase their productivity using modern resources, such as the power tools used by carpenters and shipwrights, and the refrigeration and ice making to keep fish fresh on the boats and at the markets. Most importantly, tuna fishing today relies heavily on power generators to catch live

bait at night using high voltage lights. Electricity in the Maldives has become an integral part of people's lives and livelihoods and plays a critical role in reducing both the poverty and vulnerability of island communities.

According to national statistics and the VPA 1998 (MPND, 2004b, 2007d; MPND and UNDP, 1998), the capacity of the Maldives' electricity supply has been increasing nationwide since the 1990s. In 1990, about one-third of the country's population lived without electricity. Within five years this fell to 13 percent and then seven percent (MPND and UNDP, 1998). In 1997, there were only seven islands without electricity and two-thirds of the population had access to at least six hours of electricity per day (MPND, 2004b, 2007d). By 2004, all islands had some form of electricity supply and only in three islands had fewer than six hours (MPND, 2004b). In 1998, some 55 percent of the archipelago's total population had access to 24 hours of electricity per day (MPND and UNDP, 1998), and by 2006 most islands had a 24 hour power supply (MPND, 2007d). The 2007 statistics show that only 620 households, out of 46,194, in the republic still use lamps or a similar type of lighting as an alternative for the hours when they do not have access to power (MPND, 2007e). As a general practice, islands with limited access get power in two shifts, a few limited hours during the day and five to six hours at night, starting from dusk to 10 or 11 pm, to keep household appliances like refrigerators and washing machines going.

There are many electricity providers. Only 14 percent of all islands, 28 altogether including Malé and its two remote suburbs Villingili and Hulhumalé, are supplied by the state owned company, the State Electricity Company (STELCO). Nearly six percent, about 12 islands, are supplied by private individuals and companies (see Figure 4.5).

As Figure 4.5 shows, power houses on the remaining 80 percent, some 156 islands, are owned and run by Community Based Organisations (CBOs) or NGOs, mainly by the Island Development Committees. Power generation is one of the main fund-raising sources for community development activities (MPND, 2007d). The tariffs collected from households are invested back into community development. From my discussions with members of island communities, most people prefer the service provided by CBOs over state or private companies because profits are invested back in to the community. This remarkable CBO enterprise must rank as one of the ‘best practices’ in community development that could well be replicated in other areas of socio-economic infrastructure in the atolls as well as in similar island nations where governments are unable to provide this service.

4.5.2 Harbour and jetties

Accessibility in the Maldives has always been a hurdle for the wellbeing of the island communities, limiting their socio-economic opportunities. The geographical and geological nature of these islands contributes enormously to these challenges and difficulties. Some of these islands have large shallow or deep water offshore reefs surrounded by a naturally built coral sea-wall. Others do not have offshore reefs, but the islands are completely surrounded by huge corals and deep water. The accessibility to some islands is extremely difficult and life threatening, especially in stormy weather, while access to others may be easier due to natural deep water harbours. Islands with a large shallow water offshore reef pose access difficulties

during low-tide water. As a result, there has been increasing demand for dredged harbours and entrances provided with well-built jetties in order to improve the people's socio-economic activities. Harbours and jetties would ease accessibility to the islands, and loading and unloading of transported goods and materials. Easy accessibility to the islands would increase socio-economic movement.

The first VPA survey noted that island accessibility was a problem for “more than one-half of the atoll population” (MPND and UNDP, 1998, p. 32). After seven years, the VPA II (MPND, 2004b) reports that this proportion had been reduced by half because of the government's ongoing harbour dredging programmes. However, harbour-dredging has created some adverse impacts on the environmental and ecological systems of the islands and contributed to shoreline erosion (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 - May 2006). At the same time, the poor quality of harbour and jetty construction in the majority of these islands presents a challenging task in maintaining the facilities. Despite these on-going problems, the government is still rushing to dredge the remaining harbours for political gains in the coming elections. In the near future, rebuilding these harbours and jetties is likely to increase triple in cost, which could be beyond the government's capacity. In this scenario, these island communities may become more vulnerable to man-induced disasters and catastrophes, with stranded travellers and boats, entangled between huge concrete blocks broken from the poorly-built jetties and harbour sea-walls.

4.5.3 Transport and communications

Access to reliable and cheap transport and communication networks is critically important for geographically fragmented communities scattered throughout archipelagic states, like the Maldives and Vanuatu. Because of their small economies of scale many of these smaller communities lack services and utilities. In many cases people have to travel other islands in order to obtain access to basic services. In general, this requires people to arrange their own transport, and hiring a boat or *dhoni*¹⁸ is very costly and sometimes ‘shipping’ is not available. Although it is increasingly expensive to achieve, reliable, cheap and frequent transport and

¹⁸ *Dhoni* is a *Dhivehi* word which refers here to traditional cargo-cum-passenger vessels, often called *masdhoani* or *baththeli*

communication networks not only support and solve socio-economic problems but also reduce the isolation and insularity of these communities. Moreover, they could also help local products to reach the markets in a fresh and timely manner, encouraging people on the islands to increase their productivity. This would eventually increase the contribution of island communities to the country's socio-economic progress. Therefore, it has been suggested that increased access to transport and communications "translates into reduced isolation, decreased vulnerabilities, and expanded opportunities and choices" (MPND and UNDP, 1998, p. 28).

The major mode of transportation for cargo and passengers between Malé and the atolls is traditional 'cargo-cum-passenger vessels', *dhonis*. However, the archipelago's communities, geographically dispersed over a vast area of sea, are not connected with a regularly operated or scheduled sea transportation system. Although some individual communities and private parties are operating forms of ferry services between restricted areas, scheduled ferry services are limited to between Malé and its two suburbs, Villingli and Hulhumalé. The absence of a reliable sea transport network has been identified as the major constraint for sustainable development of the country's socio-economy by *Seventh National Development 2006-2010, Creating New Opportunities* (MPND, 2007d). Most of the informants participating in the field research commented that disadvantaged individuals among the island communities are more deprived and isolated than ever before. More than a few commented on the issue in a similar fashion: "of course, there are easier, faster and quicker transports than ever before if you have money, but it [the government] should find a way for the poor who cannot afford the very costly ones" (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005-May 2006).

Air access is also an important mode of transport in the archipelago. There are two international airports in the country, Malé International Airport located in the central region of the country adjacent to Malé on Hulhule Island, and Gan International Airport¹⁹ in the southernmost atolls of Seenu. The archipelago also has three

¹⁹ Gan airport was first built by British Royal Navy and then transferred to the Royal Air force and used as a military base during World War II. The airport was closed when Gan was handed over to the

domestic airports, two in the South (Kadhdhoo Airport in Laamu atoll and Kaadeddhoo Airport in Gaafu Dhaalu atoll) and one in the North (Hanimaadhoo Airport in Haa Dhaalu atoll). Scheduled domestic flights are operated by state-owned companies, Air Maldives from the early 1990s until 2000, and, since then, Island Aviation. Air Maldives operated international flights to Asia and Europe until the company became bankrupt in 2000 and the new company, Island Aviation, took over air transport services. Once again, seven years after Air Maldives' bankruptcy, Island Aviation started scheduled flights to Trivandrum, India on 25 January 2008 as a new milestone for the archipelago's airliner. The archipelago also has one of the largest sea-plane fleets in the world, which is mainly used as a mode of transportation of tourists to their designated resort islands to and from the nation's international airport. The sea-planes are run by two private companies. However, local populations who live near the resorts can also travel by sea-plane whenever seats are available. After realising the importance of air transportation in order to connect its geographically fragmented communities, the government has recently taken a policy decision to increase the number of domestic airports by engaging private investors. Some islands have already been awarded lease contracts to develop airports. Once they are in operation, the life of some of these isolated communities will ease and become open to more socio-economic opportunities.

Land transport is available mainly on Malé and other semi-urban islands, though the majority of the islands have few vehicles to transport goods. Increased numbers of vehicles in Malé, with a land area of less than two square kilometres, is one of the main concerns of the transport sector as well as the environment. This is a matter which requires urgent action by the government to find alternatives that would address the common needs and reduce the demands for private vehicles. Roads on Malé and its two remote island suburbs Villingili and Hulhumalé are paved and well maintained but roads on other islands are generally sand gravel, except for the link-roads, causeways, linking chains of islands in Laamu and Seenu atolls. The Seenu atoll link-road is paved under an externally funded project. As reported (Fieldwork,

Maldivian government in 1976. After being abandoned for years, though most of the similar facilities on Gan, like a sea port, slip-way, and marine dock yard, have been left to decay, this excellent and expensive infrastructure, later on in the 1990s, was used as a domestic airport. The airport has been recently developed as an international airport in order to cater to the upcoming needs of tourist resorts developing in the area.

Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006), the link-road in Laamu atoll is also expected to be paved under a Japanese aid project, initiated as part of the tsunami recovery effort.

Improved communication services and utilities are crucially important for the development of geographically isolated communities, and can play a great role in reducing their socio-economic vulnerabilities. Dhiraagu, a joint-venture with the government of the Maldives and Cable and Wireless UK, was the first telephone, mobile and Internet services operator in the archipelago from 1988 to until early 2003. As a matter of fact, telephone (land line and mobile) and internet services remain very limited and expensive in the atolls though the services have been provided comparatively well to Malé and central region. Dhiraagu took more than a decade to provide basic telephone access to all inhabited islands, which was achieved in 1999 (MPND, 2004a). The first VPA in 1998 found that about one-third of the atoll population lived on islands without public telephone and about four percent of these had to travel for more than two hours to access to a public phone (MPND and UNDP, 1998). By 2004 all island communities had access to public telephones with at least two public telephone booths in addition to the telephones provided to government institutions (MPND, 2004b, 2007d). According to the Telecom Statistics generated by Telecommunications Authority of Maldives (TAM), by October 2007 there were 791 public (131 in Malé and Villingili and 601 in other islands) and 59 private card phones throughout the country (TAM, 2007b). However, access to mobile phone services remained limited to a few atolls, until a second provider came to the market, breaking the monopoly in 2005.

Progress in the communication sector during the past decade or so encouraged the government of the Maldives to take further steps to expand the communication sector by creating a competitive market. In 2003, Internet service was granted to a second party, Focus, and subsequently, in 2005, mobile service was licensed to Wataniyya Telecom Maldives Private Limited, as the second mobile operator (TAM, 2007a). As a result the users of mobile and internet services have increased because the charges have gone down significantly and a mobile network has been provided throughout the country. Especially in the atolls where land lines are limited, now mobile phone

services with nearly 100 percent of coverage are becoming the main means of communication (MPND, 2007d). Table 4.5 shows numbers of fixed telephone lines in Malé and the atolls, and total numbers of mobile subscribers in the country. This progress in the telecommunication services has shortened distances virtually and reduced the isolation and insularity of the island communities to a great extent.

Table 4.5: Number of fixed and mobile phones in the Maldives (by October 2007)	
Types of phones/Localities	Numbers
Fixed phones in Malé (Including Villingili, Hulhumalé and Aarah)	24,420
Fixed phones in other islands	7,512
Fixed phones in Resorts	962
Fixed phones uninhabited islands	199
Mobile phone subscribers in the nation	297,508
Source: (TAM, 2007b)	

Radio, television and Internet can be useful media to disseminate vital information, especially, before and after emergency events, to these communities geographically dispersed over a large area of ocean. In addition, they have become the major entertainment media for most of the communities. However, until very recently, the vast majority of atoll communities had been entertained solely by radio and, other than the central region, almost all islands have been out of reach of national television. According to the first VPA survey, national telecasts could be received only by households on Malé and nearby islands in 1998. About half of the households of the country had radios and about one in seven had TVs in the same time period, 1998. However, the VPA II in 2004 recorded a rapid progress in the media, with only 15 percent of the households still without radio and TV (MPND, 2004b). Today all islands can receive national TV, and satellite or cable TV services are widely used on the islands. Access to internet is still very limited in the atolls due to the high cost and limited accessibility to fixed lines. In addition, very rarely do island people have access to print media such as newspapers and magazines in a timely manner.

4.5.4 Water and sanitation

Safe and fresh water is important to maintain a healthy life, and reduce people's vulnerability and poverty. The islands of the Maldives do not have any natural sources of fresh water, such as streams, lakes and rivers for example, other than ground water. Fresh groundwater lenses on these islands accumulate rain water above the salt-water table. The fresh water lenses in these islands are very shallow in most cases, hence prone to pollution (MPND, 2004b). Therefore, it is critically important to have a safe and environmentally-sound water and sanitation system on these islands.

Traditionally, the population of the Maldives has relied on groundwater for drinking, cooking, washing and irrigation in all islands. Every household has at least one well and some have more than one. As a tradition, almost all islands had community wells specifically for the purposes of drinking and cooking, and the same tradition is still maintained in many islands. In recent years, many island communities are facing scarcity of fresh water and contamination due to the increasing population density and wider use of poorly installed toilet facilities in the absence of a proper sewage system. According to the VPA II (MPND, 2004b), in 2004, 90 percent of the households had toilets connected to the sea or septic tanks, whereas only six percent use *Giffili*, an open area surrounded by walls on the household compounds. All households in Malé and its two remote suburbs Villingili and Hulhumalé have access to toilet facilities (MPND, 2007d). Almost all houses with toilets on the islands discharge sewage and human waste into the ground, using septic tanks with unlined floors, which means waste can easily penetrate groundwater aquifers, contaminating the fresh water system.

In recent years, salinity has also become an increasing problem for the island communities because of sea water infiltration into ground water system, a situation worsened since the Asian tsunami (MPND, 2007d). Due to the poor condition of water and sanitation, the installation of rainwater catchments and storage tanks has been promoted in the Maldives and by 2004 the vast majority of the atoll population, about 90 percent, relied on rain water as the main source of drinking water (MPND, 2004b, 2007d). All households of Malé, including its two remote suburbs and

Komandoo island of Shaviyani atoll, have paid access to desalinated water. The desalination plant on Komandoo is run by its community. This important community initiated project was funded by its community and the government on equal basis. This has become a great inspiration to other communities to initiate such mega and complicated projects. Although these are very resource intensive projects, such examples could be a way forward for similar communities in other SIDS in resolving such problems.

4.6 Poverty and vulnerability

Poverty and vulnerability are the two concepts most often discussed in practical and academic arenas at all levels, local, national and international. Due to this, in the recent years, the winners in politics throughout the world are those who give a promising focus to disadvantaged, poor and vulnerable people in their political struggles and campaigns. There is no exception for the existence of poverty and vulnerability, neither in large nor small countries. The phenomena are not confined to developing states but are a concern of developed nations too. However, the magnitude of their existence and people's capacity to address these problems can differ from one another; hence this reality should not be denied.

Poverty is a concern in the Maldives, though often the form of poverty in the archipelago and its characteristics are debated at national and international levels. Occasionally, poverty is even denied at some individual levels because of the differences in individual perceptions from international and theoretical connotations. The disagreements and differences about the phenomenon are because 'there is no international consensus on what poverty is and how it should be measured' (Setboonsarng, 2005, p. 4). I have experienced some form of denials on various occasions in my professional life and even during the fieldwork, with responses like, "we don't have an absolute poverty in the country, Oh yes, we don't have so-called poverty, you see, no body dies here with starvation! You see, none is here, homeless!" (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). Indeed, these phrases may not be wrong – but they are not true either – because starvation and homelessness can be possible causes of poverty but not the only causes (A. Sen, 1981). These opinions may be true when they are viewed in terms of absolute

deprivation²⁰ or absolute poverty²¹ (Abbott & Pollard, 2004; A. Sen, 1981). However, these phrases are not true because families may already experience “primary poverty”, as defined by Rowntree in 1901 (A. Sen, 1981, p. 11), when “their ‘total earnings are insufficient to obtain the minimum necessities for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency’”. These denials are also not true because, as someone from an isolated small island, the researcher sees poverty “in the context of access to all forms of resources and facilities provided by or within a nation” (Novak, c1996, p. 56). This applies to the condition of the services available for the nearly one third of the country’s population living in the atolls. However, the concept of poverty could be viewed differently in the Maldives than elsewhere in developing nations. This can clearly be seen from the ADB’s statement:

The word “poverty” does not occur in Dhivehi, the Maldivian language, with the same connotations as in English. In fact very few Maldivians are destitute – fewer than elsewhere in South Asia – or indeed in many developed countries (ADB, 2002, p. 1).

The statement asserts that poverty in the Maldives is less severe than elsewhere in the region. The fact of the matter is that there is poverty in the Maldives and although fewer people can be categorised as poor, the proportion of poor is significantly high. However, those who can be categorised as poor in the Maldives may not be identical to those in the region or elsewhere in developing nations.

The Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment Surveys (VPAs) in 1998 and 2004 have used various numbers of poverty lines in the Maldives and analyses are ‘based on the theory of poverty dominance which considers a continuum of all reasonable poverty lines’ (MPND, 2005). The VPAs adopted multiple poverty lines: Rf. 15 (US \$ 1.17) as the maximum poverty line, Rf. 10 (US \$ 0.78) as intermediate poverty line, and Rf. 7.5 (US \$ 0.58) as the low poverty line per person per day. The country report of the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the Maldives* used Rf. 4.34 (US\$ 0.34) as a lowest poverty line (MPND, 2005), which was presumably adopted

²⁰ Absolute dispossession (A. Sen, 1981).

²¹ Absolute poverty is when a person and a family cannot fulfil the basic needs for food, clothing, housing, health and education and relative poverty is when an individual or a family’s income is just enough for their survival but the earnings are still below the national average or poverty line. Destitution is an extreme form of absolute poverty when the person cannot obtain a basic diet or shelter (Abbott & Pollard, 2004).

because that is equal to a less than a dollar theory, when valued in terms of PPP\$ using the value of 1993 market price. According to the VPA II (MPND, 2004b, 2005) findings which adopted three poverty lines, in 2004 three percent of Maldivians lived on an income of less than Rf. 7.5, eight percent on less than Rf. 10 and 21 percent on less than Rf. 15 per person per day. Only one percent of Maldivians lived on less than Rf. 4.34 (US\$ 0.34). This commonly used headcount ratio indicator for income poverty, “the proportion of the population below a particular poverty line”, suggests that some 23,104 people of the country’s total population earned less than Rf. 10 (US \$ 0.78). In other words, nearly one quarter earned less than the most commonly used international poverty line, US \$ 1 dollar a day. However, the researcher’s personal experience and observation from the field suggests that one cannot buy a reasonable meal for Rf. 10 from any food outlets in the Maldives, even on islands. Then it is questionable how many calories Rf. 10 worth of food would provide, if 2,100 calories of food energy intake per person per day are identified as a common basis in determining a poverty line (Setboonsarng, 2005).

The above income poverty line figures may change if they are converted in PPP value terms, which would suggest that there are barely any poor in a country like the Maldives and poverty could be virtually eliminated. One may ask that, is that the real situation? Here are two scenarios using the same facts, the same figures in real dollar terms and PPP\$ value terms. It can be seen from the Table 4.6 that only one percent of the Maldivian population live below the international poverty line, which is the lowest earnings per person per day in the Maldives. When PPP\$ value terms are considered, the VPA data show (see Table 4.6) that the government of the Maldives has already achieved the first target of the MDGs: between 1990 and 2015, to halve the proportion of population whose income is less than one dollar a day, at all level throughout the entire archipelago, Malé and the atolls (MPND, 2005). This target was achieved by 2004 and Table 4.6 shows that there was a sharp decline in income poverty between the two points of the surveys 1997 to 2004.

Table 4.6: Head count ratios based on multiple income poverty lines, Maldives, Malé, and the Atolls in 1997 and 2004 (valued in Rufiyaa, US\$ and PPP\$)								
Poverty Line			Maldives		Malé		Atolls	
Rufiyaa	US\$	PPP\$	1997	2004	1997	2004	1997	2004
7.5	0.58	1.7	13%	3%	5%	0%	16%	5%
10	0.78	2.3	23%	8%	8%	0%	28%	11%
15	1.17	3.5	44%	21%	19%	3%	52%	28%
Source: extracted from (MPND, 2004b; MPND and UNDP, 1998).								

Table 4.6, however, also reveals the existence of a poverty gap and income inequality between Malé and the atolls. Only 3 percent of the Malé people lived with less than Rf. 15 per person per day, whereas 28 percent of the atolls population lived on less than Rf. 15 per person per day in 2004. Moreover, the atolls' income poverty level in 2004 had not reached Malé's 1997 level, which is a clear reflection of the disparities between Malé and the atolls.

The VPA II also found that some of those who were not in the category of poor had fallen into poverty. According to the report within the period of seven years, between 1997 to 2004, three out of five poor in 1997 had escaped from poverty, whereas one in five of the non-poor fell into poverty and seventeen percent remained chronically poor (MPND, 2004b). Poverty, therefore, remains a dynamic issue in the Maldives.

As it has been discussed earlier in this section, poverty in general is not merely an income-related phenomenon but also relates to other socio-economic aspects, and level of accessibility to services such as access to education, health, transport, communication, energy, water and sanitation, housing, and consumer goods and their quality (ADB, 2002). In the Maldives, there is an age-old disparity between Malé and the atolls in the availability of socio-economic infrastructure. Poverty in the Maldives, therefore, is, due on the one hand, to the inherent geographical nature of the country, such as fragmentation and the small size of the islands and communities, and, on the other, to the governance, policies and political commitment to a large extent.

It has been found that people who are engaged in agriculture, fishing and other local manufacturing are likely to be more vulnerable and poorer than those who are employed in tourism, trade or government sectors (MPND, 2007d). For an example, according to the VPA II (MPND, 2004b), in most of the cases female-headed households are more likely to be poor because they are engaged in agriculture and local manufacturing sectors. About one in three female households earn less than Rf. 15 per person per day. In the atolls, government jobs are very limited and tourism is not widespread. It has been found that island families with a member who is working elsewhere, employed in tourism, trade, transport and shipping, are better off than families who are entirely dependent on earnings from their localities (Kruijk & Rutten, 2007; MPND, 2004b).

Poverty and vulnerability in the Maldives are dynamic and multi-dimensional and are caused by various inherent and human-induced or policy driven factors. Socio-economic vulnerability in the Maldives is due to the small size of the islands in terms of the land and population, which creates small economies or diseconomies of scale. Other factors are fragmentation of the island communities and their isolation, with limited income generation avenues. The *Human Development Report of the Maldives 2007* suggests that vulnerability stems from an interplay of factors including remoteness, geographical dispersion, vulnerability to natural disasters and limited natural resources (MPND, 2007c). Moreover, age-old centrally focused development in the archipelago has exacerbated the situation further at the micro-level with increased urban migration. This is mainly due to the large discrepancy in socio-economic and physical infrastructures between Malé and the atolls. At the same time, at the macro-level the socio-economic vulnerability has been increased due to the growing focus on two economic industries, tourism and fisheries, which are highly vulnerable to external shocks, especially tourism, as shown by the adverse impact of the Asian tsunami (World Bank, 2006b).

On the one hand, fragility of the ecosystem and the ecological and geographical nature of the archipelago have been identified as the main reason for environmental vulnerability. These include factors like widespread beach erosion due to the coral and sand mining, salinity of freshwater lenses due to the overuse and drainage of

water, and concern over the rising sea-level and other alarming threats of global warming (ADB, 2002; MPND, 2007d; World Bank, 2006b). On the other hand, some adverse effects of rapid socio-economic growth and increasing population have been found, such as increasing groundwater pollution due to the improper treatment of sewage and solid waste disposal and overuse of the water (ADB, 2002). The booming construction and building in some of the urban and densely populated islands in the Maldives are also contributing to salinity because, in most cases, freshwater is drained and piped out to the sea when foundations are laid for multi-storey buildings. Some of these factors leave the archipelago, especially the island communities, more exposed to natural disasters with increased challenges to the development (ADB, 2002; MPND, 2007d). In order to address poverty and vulnerability-linked issues and problems, the government of the Maldives has taken various measures. The next section will briefly describe some of those policy measures.

4.6.1 Measures taken to reduce the poverty and vulnerability

In previous discussions of this section, it has been outlined that the small size of the islands in terms of land and population, dispersion of the communities on low-lying scattered islands throughout the country on a 90,000 square kilometres of the Indian ocean with only two percent of land mass, and limited land based resources, including water, are the main inherent factors for poverty and vulnerability in the Maldives. Moreover, the age-old system of governance and policies, centrally based one zone development, has increased the dilemma. In spite of all this, in the past decades there have been enormous improvements in socio-economic development at micro and macro levels. For decades the government has realised the increasing disparities between Malé and the atolls, and it has run a series of programmes and projects in order to integrate the islands into the mainstream economy and development. In the 1970s and 80s the policy concept was Integrated Atoll Development (IAD) which was designed mainly to provide islands with very basic physical and social infrastructures (MPND, 2004a). This achieved some improvements, but the main problem, increased urban versus rural disparities, was never addressed. As a result, since the 1990s the government has taken more vigorous measures to reduce the gap by shifting its age-old policy – one zone

development – to Regional Development or Regional Growth Centres, and Population Consolidation Development.

The Regional Development Policy (RDP) has been introduced to reduce the disparities between Malé and the atolls, especially when past approaches proved ineffective and unsustainable for the development of the socio-economy of the atoll population, which are two thirds of the nation's population. Although the archipelago has seen very impressive progress in socio-economic development indicators, the disparities and discrepancies are increased between Malé and the atolls because of the poorly provided socio-economic services and limited physical infrastructure in the atolls. The government is, therefore, intending to take more balanced approaches for the nation's development, diverting its years of concentration away from the central zone towards RDP approaches.

The country has been divided into five strategic regions under the regional development policy, as follow:

1. Northern Development Region (NDR) which covers the northernmost three atolls, Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu and Shaviyani;
2. Northern Central Development Region (NCDR) covering four North Central atolls, Noonu, Raa, Baa and Lhaviyani;
3. Central Development Region (CDR) which includes four Central atolls, Kaafu, Alifu Alifu, Alifu Dhaalu, and Vaavu;
4. Southern Central Development Region (SCDR) consisting of five of the South Central atolls, Meemu, Faafu, Dhaalu, Thaa, and Laamu, and
5. Southern Development Region (SDR) that covers four of the southernmost atolls, Gaafu Alifu, Gaafu Dhaalu, Gnaviayni and Seenu (MPND, 2004a, 2007d).

The RDP's main objective is to address the country's most challenging problem, the widening disparity between Malé and the atolls. The challenge is aimed to address and achieve the following areas:

- “Increase the range of economic and employment opportunities;
- Make the atolls more prosperous, livable and sustainable, and

- Make the population living in the atolls healthier, more educated and more resilient” (MPND, 2007d, p. 24).

The government has already established two Regional Development Management Offices (RDMOs), NDR and SDR, in 2002 under the first Regional Development Project started in late 1990s. However, findings from this study’s preliminary and in-depth fieldwork visits show that people are not very impressed by the RDP. Most of the informants had negative perceptions. According to most, even the informants from the islands, Kulhudhuffushi of Haa Dhaalu atoll (NDR) and Hithadhoo of Seenu atoll (SDR) where the RDMOs are located: we don’t see any good happening as such for the entire region and [RDP] has not permeated beyond these two islands other than in a few things [mainly the two sea ports (one in Kulhudhuffushi and one in Hithadhoo) and the link-road of the SDR constructed under the project] (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). Irrespective of the subsequent criticisms concerning the limitations of the first project, the second phase of the RDP project has been implemented, targeting the other three regions.

The government’s main objective of the Population and Development Consolidation (PDCP) is to address one of the most critical challenges to the archipelago’s socio-economic development; “the wide dispersal of small communities” (MPND, 2007d). The intention is to relocate all small island communities to larger islands that have potential for socio-economic development through a systemic resettlement programme thereby reducing the number of inhabited islands from 199 to some 80 islands (MPND, 2004a). The VPA surveys and other studies conducted in the Maldives show that small communities are more vulnerable than larger communities; populations of less than 200 had an average Human Vulnerability Index (HVI) of 5.3 while the HVIs dropped to 4.0, 2.4 and 2.1 as the population increased to 1000, 2000 and 4000 respectively (MPND, 2004b, 2007a; MPND and UNDP, 1998). The concept was introduced as a policy measure in 1998, though it was already practised in the 1960s and 1970s. For example, during fieldwork the researcher met several people on Maduvvari island of Raa atoll, who had originally come from two other islands (now uninhabited). They commented that the reason for resettlement was the inhospitable environment and vulnerability of the former islands. Although,

reportedly, the PDC policy concept has been currently integrated as a key strategic component of the Regional Development Policy, the past experience has revealed inconsistency with the policy concept in practice.

The other remarkable developmental steps taken in order to address disparity are the introduction of Island Development Plans (IDPs) and Atoll Development Plans (ADPs) though these initiatives are not yet formally institutionalised as part of the development policy. Reportedly, by 2006, training of atoll and island personnel was completed and now most of the islands have IDPs. Although partial funds for a few projects are provided by the Public Sector Investment Program (PSIP), funding remains a discouraging hurdle for the initiatives, because IDPs and ADPs are not institutionally mechanised as a policy tool in order to be funded through a central or atoll budget.

Under the national reform agenda the Maldives' government has articulated a new law to create a local governance system through decentralisation. Under this law, the government has proposed to replace Island and Atoll Development Committees (IDCs and ADCs) with Island and Atoll Councils, and IDPs and ADPs will become part of the Councils' mandatory works (MoAD, 2007). According to the law both central and local government will provide funding for both IDPs and ADPs.

The Asian tsunami hit the Maldives and washed away several islands, claiming more than 100 lives and destroying livelihoods and assets of numbers of communities. After the immediate impact of the tsunami, the government established a National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) and later on the Centre was declared as a permanent institution in 26 December 2005, one year after the disastrous tsunami and all its tasks have been assigned temporarily to the Ministry of Defence and National Security (NDMC, 2007). Mainly, the NDMC's mandates remain as coordination of the relief activities and aid received in the events of any disaster, provision of temporary shelters for affected people or displaced people and conduction of awareness programmes among the government institutions and public (NDMC, 2007). However, the Centre remains weak in terms of its capacity and staff and central location of its all functions.

4.7 Civil society

Civil society is an area that has not been talked about in the context of the modern era until very recently. However, as a tradition, the Maldives has strong community participation in socio-economic development activities on the islands. This has been one of the main factors contributing to its socio-economic achievements that we have seen today. The majority of socio-economic and physical infrastructures are built and maintained on the islands with enormous contribution from the communities, both financially and in-kind. Often they are initiatives of the island communities themselves. Almost all municipal functions on the islands, such as cleaning, maintenance of public and communal resources and utilities, have been undertaken by the respective island community (MPND, 2002/2004).

Until the past few decades, civil society, in the Maldives island context, has been limited to a group of ‘noble elites’, *bodun*, who have been the only lobbying groups working as intermediaries between the state politics and people. Traditionally, these ‘noble elites’ used to be, in practice, families who have created an aristocratic position amongst the community, their resourcefulness for the people based on knowledge and monetary values. However, the nobles in Malé are somewhat different; they are called differently as the ‘*beyfulhun*’ and regarded as a higher class than the nobles from the islands. Even the conversational patterns used with nobles in Malé are the highest in the Dhivehi language in terms of morphology. Nonetheless, in the past they were the only civil society per se. As defined for the purpose of the research in chapter three, ‘civil society’ is the people and their social organisations which create a link with the state. In practice these ‘noble elites’ are influential to a great extent in atoll and island politics, appointing island and atoll chiefs and other island and atoll level government personnel. However, since the past two decades or so, this traditional ‘noble elite’ concept of civil society has been gradually eroding and taking its place is a similar form of civil society as in the context of the modern era, though influences still remain to some extent.

In terms of this modern civil society, since the past two or three decades the number of Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) has increased. As of May 2001 there were 283 registered NGOs, largely

localised to islands, with each island having on average of two organisations (MPND, 2002/2004), while, by December 2006, there were 682 organisations registered under the NGOs law and of these, 253 were registered in Malé and 429 in the atolls (Zahir, 2007). Today, according to the most recent National Development Plan (NDP), the Seventh NDP, there are more than 250 national NGOs affiliated with the National Association of Youth NGOs of the Ministry of Youth and Sports alone (MPND, 2007d). NGOs play an important role in the development process in the Maldives by mobilising community participation and initiating development projects at island, atoll and national levels (MPND, 2002/2004). A survey of three NDPs, the fifth, sixth and seventh (MPHRE, 1997a; MPND, 2002/2004, 2007d), shows an increasing importance given to the NGOs and CBOs as development partners. Particularly, the seventh NDP (MPND, 2007d) has clearly expressed the need to enable private and civil society participation in development. It also has included NGOs and CBOs in its articulated policies and strategies for some of the socio-economic areas, such as controlling narcotic and drug abuse, protecting child and family well-being, promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities and creating an entrepreneurial culture amongst young people. However, the field information from this study suggests that NGOs and CBOs at the atolls are not provided with sufficient support by the government to play a civil society role.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, a brief geographical and historical background of the Maldives has been given, followed by a discussion of the system of governance and its institutional arrangements for national and local levels. Then the situation of socio-economy and physical infrastructure of the country has been examined to show how effective the system is in addressing the problems of island communities. Furthermore the conditions of poverty and vulnerability have been reviewed, together with the main factors causing these phenomena in the country, especially in the island communities. At the same time the chapter has also mentioned some of the policy measures taken to reduce poverty and vulnerability. Finally, it has also outlined the settings of the civil society in the archipelago and how it has been contributing to the societal development. Based on the discussions and comments from different stakeholders of the society it can be said that socio-economic services and standard

of living in the Maldives have been improved in the past few decades or so but still the gap between urban and rural island communities is widening. Disparities are increasing and the vast majority of people cannot afford or access the basic socio-economic services. Therefore, the current system of governance cannot be suggested as the most appropriate one for the country nor can its institutions effectively reduce poverty and vulnerability, as shown by the existing disparities. This chapter has presented a case study of a centralised system of governance, the Maldives, and the following chapter will appraise a decentralised system, Vanuatu, to see how it works in addressing very similar problems.

Chapter 5

Vulnerability in the Context of Vanuatu: the Role of Governance in Reducing Vulnerability

5.1 Introduction

In chapter four, the thesis discussed ‘vulnerability’ in the context of the Maldives and the role of governance in addressing issues of vulnerability. The chapter covered institutional frameworks of the Maldives, its socio-economic conditions, physical infrastructure, and involvement of the civil society in addressing societal problems.

Similar to chapter four, chapter five opens with a brief geographical and historical background of Vanuatu. The chapter then outlines the governance and vulnerability of the archipelago in a development context, which presents institutional frameworks, socio-economic conditions, physical infrastructure, and involvement of the civil society in addressing societal problems. It will also identify some of the policy measures taken in order to enhance the governance system and reduce vulnerability and poverty of the most disadvantaged groups, the island and village communities, while highlighting the issues of disparities between urban and rural communities.

The discussions in the chapter are mainly based on secondary data from Vanuatu with support of primary data collected during my field visit to the country. As in the previous chapter, the discussions in this chapter emerge from a consideration of the following key questions:

- How effectively is ‘governance’ institutionalised to reduce vulnerability and is it appropriate for the socio-economic development of the country and well being of the people?
- What are the differences between the livelihoods of remote communities and their wellbeing and that of communities at the centre or closer to the centre?

The chapter also will cover some other research questions, in particular;

- What are the most vulnerable areas in small island states?
- What are the socio-economic and political causes of vulnerability in these states?
- How does governance impact on socio-economic and environmental vulnerability?

5.2 Vanuatu

The Republic of Vanuatu, formerly known as the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides, is a Y-shaped archipelago consisting of some 80 islands²² (Bevan, 1990, p. 11; IPS, 1980, pp. 11-15; Miles, 1998, p. 8; SOPAC, 2000, p. 32; Vanuatu, 2003, p. 22; VNSO, 2002a) and 221,507 people (VNSO, 2007a, 2007d). The archipelago covers an approximate total land area of 12,190 square kilometres with an EEZ of about 710,000 square kilometres of ocean (SOPAC, 2000; VNSO, 2002a). The capital of this Melanesian archipelago, Port Vila, lies some 2,200 kilometres from Sydney, Australia and 2,000 kilometres from Auckland, New Zealand (VNSO, 2002a, p. 1). Vanuatu's closest neighbours are the Solomon Islands, about 170 km to the north, and New Caledonia about 230 km to the south-west (Mourgues, 2005, p. 7), see Figure 5.1 Vanuatu Map. Of the 80 islands of Vanuatu, 65 were listed as inhabited in the 1999 National Census and 44 of these have a population of less than 1000 (Vanuatu, 2000a). According to the 2002 Census (VNSO, 2002a) only 12 islands are significant in terms of their economy and population. The islands of the country range in size from the seven square kilometres of Aniwa to the 4010 square kilometres of Espiritu Santo (Bevan, 1990, p. 11; Mourgues, 2005, p. 7; VNSO, 2002a). These islands are mainly volcanic with a mixture of mountainous and low-land terrains. About 35 percent of the country is above 300 metres with the highest point of 1,879 metres on Tabwemasana, whose lowest slopes are greater than 20 degrees (VNSO, 2002a).

²² My survey through existing literature found that there is an inconsistency in the literature about the total numbers of islands in Vanuatu, ranging from 80 to 83, 85 and 100 (CIA, n.d.; FSPI, 2003; Huffer & Molisa, 1999a; Jayaraman & Ward, 2006). I have taken the figure 80 because most often the government documents and the majority of the literature have gone for that figure.

Figure 5.1: Vanuatu Map

Source: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu>, accessed on May 23, 2008.

The archipelago was first explored by Europeans in 1606, when a Portuguese navigator, Ferdinand de Queiros, landed on its largest island and named it Tierra Australia del Espiritu Santo (VNSO, 2002a; Woodward, 2002, p. 16). More than a century later, a French explorer Louis-Antoine de Bougainville discovered more islands in 1768 and named the group as Les Grandes Cyclades (VNSO, 2002a; Woodward, 2002, p. 17). Following this, in the same year the famous British explorer Captain James Cook named the whole archipelago New Hebrides (Woodward, 2002, p. 17).

Europeans' interest in the New Hebrides was triggered in the mid 1820s when sandalwood was discovered in Tanna, and European traders, planters, and different denominations of church missionaries, especially British and French, began to arrive and settle in increasing numbers in the 1860s (VNSO, 2002a; Woodward, 2002, p. 17). This was the starting point of the tug-of-war between the two rival colonial powers, France and Britain, to bring the New Hebrides under their administration. Eventually, Anglo-French colonial rivalry ended in 1906 when the archipelago was jointly annexed by the British and French, creating a joint administration called the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides (VNSO, 2002a; Woodward, 2002, p. 23). Seventy three years of joint Anglo-French colonial rule ended on 30th July 1980 and the name New Hebrides was replaced by the Republic of Vanuatu (VNSO, 2002a; Woodward, 2002, p. 68).

The population of the archipelago is 221,507; of these nearly 78 percent are dispersed over 63 scattered islands and about 22 percent of the people live on the two islands with urban centres, Port Vila and Luganville, with 33,155 and 10,896 people respectively (VNSO, 2007a, 2007d). According to the 1999 Census (Vanuatu, 2000a) the majority of the population were concentrated along the narrow coastal strips of the inhabited islands. Although people on the rural islands are known for their reliance on the 'gardening' of staple food crops as the main source of survival, there is an increasing trend towards rural out-migration with people seeking more opportunities to get money (FSPI, 2003; Mourgues, 2005; VNSO, 2002a). The fieldwork of this study revealed an on-going decline in reliance on home-grown staple foods, which are increasingly being displaced by imported food such as rice and wheat flour. Box 5.1 narrates the story of a villager and his daughter who wanted to eat rice.

Box 5.1: A story of a farmer in Mele village, Vanuatu

One day, during my field visit to the largest village in Vanuatu, I met a villager coming out from his garden carrying some food crops (cassava). We walked together talking about different issues related to life and livelihoods that made up my fieldwork. When we reached his house he went in to give to his wife what he was carrying so that she could prepare the meal for the day. While I was waiting outside I could overhear the conversation he was having with his wife. After some time, he came out with a look of deep sorrow and I asked what happened, was anything wrong? He replied in a very low voice, "My daughter doesn't want cassava. She says, 'Dad! all the time cassava and yam, No, dad! I want to eat rice today'". Then he said, "She has been insisting on eating rice but I don't have cash to buy it". I could not bear to see this and offered some cash so he could buy rice for her (Fieldwork, Efate Island, September 2006).

Despite the vast majority of the rural communities in the archipelago experiencing hardship due to the lack and poor quality of basic services, surprisingly, the archipelago was listed as the happiest place in the world in a study carried out by the UK-based Think-Tank, New Economics Foundation (NEF), in 2006²³ (Marks, et al., 2006). It is common in Vanuatu that people, especially the rural villagers or islanders, say that we are happy with everything we have in our garden and we are satisfied with it and can live with it (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, August- September 2006). Similar expressions came up very often during the fieldwork interviews in Vanuatu, even from the government officials.

Vanuatu may be small in terms of size and population, but the archipelago is known for having the highest numbers of languages per head, estimated at over 100 spoken languages throughout the country (Hindson, 1995; VNSO, 2002a). Some may be spoken by just a few people but this enormous number of languages suggests the enormous diversity of the archipelago (FSPI, 2003; Hindson, 1995; Mourgues, 2005). Sometimes, this proves a challenge for the country's development as

²³ The study was carried out by New Economics Foundation (NEF) compiling a new index, called Happy Planet Index (HPI). The HPI includes indicators such as life satisfaction, life expectancy and ecological foot print (Marks, Simms, Thompson, & Abdallah, 2006). This is a contrasting index to GDP indexation but somewhat similar to Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH). It is calculated as:
$$\text{HPI} = \frac{\text{Life Satisfaction} \times \text{Life Expectancy}}{\text{Ecological Foot Print}}$$

competition and tensions can arise between the various cultural groups (Mourgues, 2005). The national language of the country is Bislama (Pidgin) and the official languages are Bislama, English and French, with the two languages of its former colonisers set constitutionally as the principal languages for the country's educational system (Vanuatu, 1980). Most people are Christians (83%) but some of the islanders still adhere to traditional beliefs. With the arrival of evangelical movements and other than mainstream sects, there is an increasing diversity of religious institutions and religions (FSPI, 2003; VNSO, 2002a).

The economy of the Vanuatu is mainly based on tourism and agriculture. Although agriculture has been the mainstay and means of livelihood for most of the islanders, tourism shares a significantly high proportion of GDP, some 40 percent in 2000, and is the main source of foreign exchange earnings. Although in the past years, economic growth has been increasing on average, it was reported in 2002 that 40 percent of all Ni-Vanuatu and 51 percent of the rural population earned below the poverty line, on less than US \$1 a day (ADB, 2003). The UNDP's *Human Development and Human Poverty Indices* (HDI and HPI) ranked Vanuatu numbers 120 and 56 respectively in 2007 (UNDP, 2007). The archipelago met the criteria to qualify for graduation from the LDCs for the first time in 2006 (UN, 2006). Nevertheless, the archipelago's vast majority of rural village and island communities, over 78 percent of the population, still suffer from vulnerability due to the lack of basic socio-economic infrastructure and services such as proper water and sanitation facilities, energy, health and education, causing increased disparities between urban and rural communities.

5.3 Governance and its institutional structure

Vanuatu has a unique history in terms of its systems of governance through pre-colonial to colonial and post colonial periods. The first two eras – pre-colonial (traditional chiefdoms) and colonial (the Anglo-French Condominium) – have had a great impact on the post colonial era, since the archipelago achieved independence in 1980. Traditionally, the country had tribal chieftainships in the pre-colonial period, in which tribes were governed by tribal or clan chiefs through *Nakamal* (FSPI, 2003; Hindson, 1995; Huffer & Molisa, 1999a). Each of these tribal communities still

maintain different customs – traditional beliefs, values, practices and languages – and, therefore, diverse governance structures are practised in each different tribal area (FSPI, 2003; Hindson, 1995). It is a chief's responsibility to look after the community by managing all tribal affairs, resolving conflicts, and keeping law and order (FSPI, 2003). Interviews with field informants revealed that, even nowadays, conflicts are mainly resolved and peace maintained by the chiefs.

According to the FSPI study (2003, p. 87), in the northern part of the country “a man earns merit and attains traditional rank through serving his people well over a period of time”. Chiefly rank is open to anyone and is usually confirmed by the killing of a required number of pigs. In the southern part of the archipelago, leadership is chiefly inherited through bloodlines and systems are highly structured. For example, in Tanna the chiefs, ‘*Iaramara*’, have absolute authority over their people and lands (FSPI, 2003). The chiefs have spokespersons, ‘*Ieni*’, and both chiefs and their spokespersons are assisted by councils and traditional police (FSPI, 2003). During the field visit to Tanna, the researcher visited one of these tribes. Tribal members refused to talk without their *Iaramara*, who at the time was in his garden, so he was called. When he came everyone sat under the nambanga tree,²⁴ known as the *Nakamal*, and had a long discussion on the field themes of interest to this study. Amazingly, the people who had refused to talk in the absence of their *Iaramara* talked very openly once the *Iaramara* was present. One can imagine the extent of the influence and impact these diverse traditional systems would have on any attempt to introduce a uniform modern system of governance and how difficult it would be to establish alongside traditional systems, ignoring their norms and values.

Then came a period in which the traditional customs and the systems of governance were influenced by external values and systems, starting from the first exploration by European explorers and missionaries in 1606 to the end of the Anglo-French colonial period in 1980. Within this long period, almost four centuries, some additional languages (Bislama, French and English), educational syllabuses (French versus English), spiritual values (Christianity and its different denominations) and

²⁴ The big banyan tree is called “nambanga” and in Tanna, certain nambanga trees are used as meeting places, known as *Nakamal*, for the men. The *Nakamal* in the northern part of the country refers to a house, a meeting house, for men.

governance norms (English versus French systems) were introduced (Hindson, 1995). During its colonial period, Vanuatu was governed through two different simultaneous systems of administration and judiciary, British and French, including courts, police, education, health and churches (FSPI, 2003; Hindson, 1995; Vanuatu, 2003). For administrative purposes, the country was then divided into four districts (FSPI, 2003), with two different types of Local Government systems: the British Local Councils and the French Community Councils (Vanuatu, 2003).

Each of the socio-political and religious institutions established by these two powers was trying to spread its own culture, values, norms and languages (Hindson, 1995). The tug of war between these two rivals and the socio-political and cultural differences exercised upon the local people, Ni-Vanuatu, created differences and divisions rather than uniting the country. From a historical perspective, it can be argued that the movements for independence among the locals were contributors to these differences to a large extent. Even the conflicts and differences among local leaders and parties at the time of independence were driven by the advocates and supporters of these two rival colonial powers. However, as a result of these colonial cultural norms and the embracing of Christian values by the majority of Ni-Vanuatu, there has been an understanding of the basic principle of democracy amongst the elite and educated groups in the country (Huffer & Molisa, 1999a), which can be considered a supportive factor for democratic values.

After gaining independence in 1980, the country established a parliamentary system as its form of governance. A President who serves a term of five years is the head of State. The President is elected by a two-thirds majority of the electoral college consisting of Members of Parliament and the Chairman of the Local Government Councils (FSPI, 2003; Mourgues, 2005; Vanuatu, 1980). A Prime Minister is the head of government and executive power who is elected by an absolute majority, three-fourths, of the members of the Parliament (Mourgues, 2005; Vanuatu, 1980). The Prime Minister appoints and removes the Council of Ministers, whose number should not exceed a quarter of the numbers of members of the Parliament (Vanuatu, 1980).

Vanuatu has embraced a single legislative chamber or Parliament which consists of 52 members elected by popular vote on the basis of universal suffrage for all citizens over 18 years old (Cain & Jowitt, 2004; Mourgues, 2005; Vanuatu, 1980). These members are the representatives of 17 constituencies. Between one to seven members are allocated based on the population of each constituency, so all island groups are proportionately represented in the Parliament (Cain & Jowitt, 2004). The members of Parliament serve for a four year term (VNSO, 2002a). The judicial system is separated from the executive power and directly subject to the Constitution. All members of the judiciary, except the Chief Justice who is appointed by the President of the country after consultation with the Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader, are appointed by the President of the Republic with the advice of the Judicial Service Commission (Vanuatu, 1980). The archipelago has island and village level courts and chiefs are also given some judicial roles in these courts (Vanuatu, 1980).

There are two other very important institutions, the Ombudsman and National Council of Chiefs, the *Malvatumauri*. The Ombudsman is appointed by the President of the country with advice from the Prime Minister, Speaker of the Parliament, Representatives of the political parties in Parliament, all Chairmen of the National Council of Chiefs, Local Government Councils, Public Service Commission and Judicial Service Commission. Members of the National Council Chiefs are elected from the District Councils of Chiefs and the Council acts as an advisory body for government institutions regarding tradition and customary issues, land and language (Mourgues, 2005; Vanuatu, 1980).

In summary, the current Vanuatu governance system is the mixed result of three eras, traditional, colonial and independence. The first has been identified by researchers as a stateless era “ruled by chiefs and so-called ‘bigmen’” and Vanuatu has also been regarded as a ‘weak’²⁵ state in both its colonial and post colonial periods, “in relation to other social actors (chiefs), or in relation to corrosive social forces”

²⁵ “Weak’ refers to the relationship between state and society” and “defined in terms of the inability of state elites to act against strong local resistance”, which is drawn on Migdal’s idea on weak state (Larmour, 1996b, pp. 1,3). Migdal’s (1988) work is mainly referred to this subject and also see Migdal’s (2001), and Cheema and Rondinelli’s (2007) work in this area.

(Larmour, 1996b, p. 3). The key factor for the state being weak is that all land in Vanuatu belongs to the customary owners (Vanuatu, 1980). As a result, state governance is heavily influenced by the tribal leaders and communities, especially at the local (village) level.

5.3.1 Institutional framework for outer-island and village administration

Vanuatu introduced a decentralised system from the very beginning of independence, in order to address the administrative challenges due to the geographical dispersion and relative isolation of the archipelago's island population over some 68²⁶ islands (Vanuatu, 1988). To empower its people the Constitution includes legislation for decentralisation, giving people the constitutional rights to participate in the decision-making process at local level. Under this legislation, the central government established Provincial Government Councils, dividing the country into eleven regions between 1981 and 1983: Malekula, Shepherds, Ambae/Maewo, Tafea, Banks/Torres, Panama, Ambrym, Epi, Santo/Malo, Pentecost, and Efate (VNSO, 2002a). In 1994, the government restructured the Provincial Governments again, creating six Provincial Government Councils: Torba, Sanma, Penama, Malampa, Shefa and Tafea (Mourgues, 2005; VNSO, 2002a).

A literature survey, especially of government documents, shows that the government's policy objective behind its decentralised system was to bring a more equal pattern of development to the regions, by transferring some responsibilities and tasks to the elected Local Government Councils (LGCs) (Vanuatu, 1988). However, the intention was not to devolve the powers nor to establish autonomous Provincial Governments (Vanuatu, 1988). According to the Decentralisation Review Commission (DRC), Vanuatu's current form of system is 'unitary', devolving power to the lower level governments while retaining sovereignty at the central government level (Vanuatu, 2003, p. 24). The DRC was assigned by the government of Vanuatu to evaluate and review the decentralisation process, after the Comprehensive Reform

²⁶ The 1999 Census recorded 65 islands as inhabited because residents of three small islands, Kwakea (Torba), Tangisi and Venui (Sanma), were resettled elsewhere and they remain uninhabited (Vanuatu, 2000a).

Programme (CRP) in 2000 identified that the system was not working to achieve its objectives. The DRC makes a distinction between the administrative arrangements before and after the system was restructured in 1994. According to the DRC, initially, only limited power was given to the local authorities from 1980 to 1994 but when the system was restructured in 1994 it was intended to devolve the entire authority over the government services including health, education, public works and agriculture (Vanuatu, 2003). However, according to the DRC report, it did not happen in practice mainly because of two reasons; firstly, the LGCs were confused about their roles and, secondly, the Central government retained control over the government services provided at local levels. The DRC, therefore, considers that:

The current system is merely paying lip service to the notion of decentralisation and that CG [Central Government] is still in control of all the power and resources. The system is still centralised, non-participatory, expensive, ambiguous, superimposed and it is not delivering services as expected (Vanuatu, 2003, p. 31).

In the same vein, a government official described the existing system as a “sort of deconcentration, not decentralisation” and he further added that “fiscal decentralisation is not there” (Fieldwork, Port Vila, September 2006). The researcher found similar kinds of responses on the system from fieldwork information and personal observations. The system, therefore, has not made much progress even three years after the DRC’s review. People’s impressions, including those of government officials at both national and local levels, remain the same regarding decentralisation and its effectiveness.

5.4 Socio-economic conditions

As a common practice, socio-economic conditions are studied to measure the performance of any country and its people’s wellbeing. Generally, a country’s GDPs, its growth rates, are used as key indicators to assess economic progress. At the same time, social development is measured through improvement of social services, such as education, health, electricity, water and sanitation and transport and communications, and their infrastructure and accessibility. Accordingly, this section will review the economy of Vanuatu and its education and health systems.

5.4.1 Economy

Vanuatu's economy is mainly based on agriculture, which includes forestry and fisheries, tourism, copra, cocoa, kava and cattle (Vanuatu, 2006). Once these agricultural products were referred to as the “four Cs”, and they have been the main sources of cash income for most of the rural population in the country (Jayaraman & Ward, 2006). The archipelago has a dualistic economy, the urban population (Port Vila and Luganville) mainly depending on cash income from wages and salaries, and the rural communities largely reliant on a subsistence-based economy, food from the garden and cash income from sales of agriculture, fisheries, and handicraft products (Mourgues, 2005; Tisdell, 2000; VNSO, 2007d). The recent Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) records that the income for 74 percent of urban households is based on wages and salaries and only six percent rely on agricultural products, whereas only 16 percent of rural households' income earnings are from wages and salaries and the remainder live on subsistence agriculture (VNSO, 2007d).

The country's GDP is based on three main sectors, agriculture, industry, and services, and Figure 5.2 shows the percentage contributed by each of these sectors in 2005 (DESP, 2006; Vanuatu, 2006). The contribution of the service sector has increased due to the growing tourism industry in Vanuatu. The large proportion of the GDP share by this one sector translates into the fact that “Vanuatu has a narrow income base” (Vanuatu, 2005).

Vanuatu's economic growth has been slow over the past decade or so. Economic growth has been lower than the rapidly growing population, hence poverty and

vulnerability remain an increasing concern (ADB, 2001b; Chensavasdijai & Nakabayashi, 2007; DESP, 2006; Henckel, 2006). The government of Vanuatu, therefore, launched a new reform programme, the Comprehensive Reform Program (CRP), in 1997 to address the structural problems. Although the CRP brought some improvements in some socio-economic sectors, such as public finance, banks, and especially in the cash-poor rural communities through Rural Economic Development Initiatives (REDI), some have argued that the CRP has had, so far, only limited success (Chensavasdijai & Nakabayashi, 2007; DESP, 2006; Henckel, 2006).

After experiencing a recession for two consecutive years, 2001 and 2002, since 2003 the economic growth curve has taken an upturn with a slight fall in 2006 (ADB, 2001a, 2001b; DESP, 2006; Henckel, 2006; Mourgues, 2005; UNICEF, 2005; Vanuatu, 2005, 2006; World Bank, 2007a). Figure 5.2 shows the GDP growth between 1997 and 2006. It has been noted that positive growth is expected in economy for the future years (DESP, 2006; UNICEF, 2005; Vanuatu, 2006). A number of factors have been identified for the slow pace in economy, for example, reliance on a limited range of agricultural exports (copra, coconut oil, timber, beef and cocoa), which are subject to international market prices, distance from world markets, limited capacity to make full use of natural resources, diseconomies of scale due to the high unit cost of infrastructure, and exposure to natural disasters (Vanuatu, 2005). Moreover, internal and external instability and governance factors, such as political instability, corruption and mismanagements and international market crisis, can also be included in this regard (Jayaraman & Ward, 2006; Vanuatu, 2005). Jayaraman and Ward (Jayaraman & Ward, 2006) highlight two incidents, one internal and one external, which have had negative impacts on Vanuatu's economy: the civil unrest and street protests in 1998 due to the abuse of pension funds held in the Vanuatu National Provident Fund, and the terrorist attack on 11th September, 2001 in the USA. These two events had negative impacts as can be seen from the Figure 5.3, negative growth in 1999 and sharp drops in 2001 and 2002. During these two incidents, tourist inflows declined, producing a heavy loss in the tourist industry.

It is also very important to realise that, on the one hand, the lack of economic opportunities, and poor socio-economic infrastructure in rural islands and villages prevent the rural population from participating in the national economy to a large extent. On the other hand, the vast majority of the population in rural areas merely rely on subsistence food crops, rather than cash crops. The HIES reports that only about 26 percent of the working age population are actively engaged in cash income earnings, with nearly 38 percent involved in subsistence farming and some 37 percent either unemployed or not active (VNSO, 2007d) (see Figure 5.4).

In Vanuatu, agriculture has been the mainstay of its economy and main source of livelihood for about 78 percent of the total population living in rural areas (VNSO, 2002a). The Agricultural Census 2006 reports that there are 43,312 households in the

country and, of these, 37,848 households have gardening plots, which implies that they are involved in some form of agricultural activities (VNSO, 2007a). Table 5.1 shows that the earnings from some exported commodities have declined to a large extent, especially copra which has gone down more than three to four fold, while earnings from others, especially *kava*, gradually increased between 1999 and 2006 (VNSO, 2007b).

Table 5.1: Exports by major agricultural commodities, 1999-2006								
Commodity	Export earnings (million Vatu)							
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Copra	1,384	1,096	323	174	282	446	126	324
Kava	379	478	503	230	228	440	477	698
Cocoa	148	147	64	141	295	160	181	277
Timber	363	415	334	197	249	247	203	306
Beef	404	380	239	194	287	286	302	332
Coconut Oil	-	126	362	471	382	1,026	733	193
Resource: Data from (VNSO, 2007b)								

However, it can also be noticed from Table 5.1 that, other than coconut oil, earnings from all commodities increased in 2006 compared to 2005. This was not only due to the market price but also in some cases an increase in volume of exported commodities. Exports of copra, cocoa, timber and beef increased significantly in volumes during the second quarter of 2006 whereas exports of *kava* decreased from 227 tonnes to 167 tonnes in the June quarter of 2005 (VNSO, 2007c). The earnings, therefore, are based on both fluctuations in market price and volume of exported commodities.

Vanuatu has the fertile land necessary to improve its agriculture industry but requires more trained professionals. To meet the training needs of this important sector for the country's economy, the Vanuatu Agriculture College was established and officially opened on 26th January 2007 (Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, 2007). It is expected that this newly established, very important institute will bring some positive changes to the country's economy by advancing the agricultural industry.

The fishing industry in Vanuatu is comparatively small, just one percent of GDP, and insufficiently exploited, even though about 98 percent of the archipelago's total area is covered by the Pacific Ocean (DESP, 2006; Mourgues, 2005). However, according to the 1999 Census, about 61 percent (19,498 households) of the households regularly go fishing and of these about 90 percent fish for subsistence (Vanuatu, 2000a). In 2006, reportedly, 31,230 households were engaged in some form of fisheries (VNSO, 2007a). Although the reefs are over-fished in some areas, in general, fishing is under-exploited in the surroundings of the outer islands, thus has the potential for further development (Vanuatu, 2000a). The need for improvements of the fisheries sector and its commercialisation was identified in the Priorities and Action Agenda 2006 – 2015 (PAA) (DESP, 2006), and could be a potential avenue for a more diversified economy.

Tourism is the largest single industry in Vanuatu, which brings foreign exchange earnings, nearly 60 percent, to the country's economy while generating 40 percent of the GDP (Jayaraman & Ward, 2006; Mourgues, 2005). Numbers of tourist arrivals are increasing annually. In 2000 a total of 105,439 visitors (57,591 by air and 47,848 through cruise ships) arrived in the country, while the total number of arrivals in 2006 were 154,101 (68,179 through air and 85,922 through cruise ships) (VNSO, 2008). The tourism industry employs about 6,200 people, mostly in the Port Vila area (DESP, 2006). Presently, tourism is concentrated on the urban areas, Port Vila on the island of Efate and Luganville on Santo; about 90 percent of the country's hotel capacity rests in Vila alone and very little goes to the rural areas (Jayaraman & Ward, 2006; Mourgues, 2005). Tourists prefer the two urban centres because access to other islands is not very easy, though scheduled domestic flights are available to other areas of the country.

Vanuatu, being extraordinarily beautiful with mountainous high land and low-lying beaches, tropical forests with full of colourful flora and fauna, live volcanoes, and culturally diverse people with multiple vernaculars, is an attractive place for tourists and explorers. Tourism, therefore, could be a potentially promising industry for the country's economy if developed properly. If tourism were expanded over other areas of the country it could generate additional employment, especially in rural areas,

which would eventually foster the wellbeing of the island communities (DESP, 2006). However, adequate infrastructure is a prerequisite for such development, which will require strong local governance system in parallel with equal commitment from central government. The development should be strategically planned together with other industries, in order to limit adverse impacts on the economy. Since tourism is based on mainly international markets, it could experience negative impacts from any internal and external shocks or natural disasters, as has been experienced in the past on several occasions. In the 1980s, there were a number of incidents which caused dramatic falls in tourism, such as the political instability and civil unrest immediately after independence, problems in terms of air travel after the Australian airline Ansett pulled out of Vanuatu, the major cyclone in 1987 which destroyed tourist facilities and other infrastructures, and the political instability in 1988 (DESP, 2006). In addition, the tourism industry also suffered in 1998 from the civil unrest arising from the misuse of the Vanuatu National Provident Fund and the aftermath of 9/11 in 2001 (Jayaraman & Ward, 2006). The government has formulated a tourism master plan which has been adopted after revision to address these issues (DESP, 2006). This may continue to boost the industry in the future.

5.4.2 Education

Education is the key for development of any society and one of the crucial tools to lift people from chronic poverty and vulnerability. Education should be one of the first priorities of all governments. The main objective behind the *World Declaration on Education for All*, adopted at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, is to empower people through education so that upcoming generations will have the capacity to build up their own lives. The main target for Education for All (EFA) is to achieve basic education, universal early childhood and primary education, by 2015, which equates to the MDGs' second goal (UN, 2008; UNESCO, 1995-2007). The government of Vanuatu, like other nations, has been working to achieve these internationally ratified goals for the wellbeing of its own people.

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, provision of socio-economic infrastructures, such as education, with their high unit costs, to geographically

dispersed communities is a great challenge. In most cases, each island community with its relatively small population would require a separate unit. However, where islands are large and the population widely dispersed, then it would require more than one institution on the island. Often this has been the case in Vanuatu. The *Education Master Plan 2000 –2006* (EMP) has identified this as a crucial reason for the high costs of the education system: “the costs are high largely because of the small size of classes” and the numbers of small primary schools needed to cover the dispersed communities (Vanuatu, 1999, p. 68).

Moreover, the archipelago has the dilemma of a dual educational system, inherited from the Anglo-French Condominium administration. Historically, the first formal education was provided by missionaries of the different denominations and churches and then two separate formal education systems, Anglophone and Francophone, were established by the British and French administrations (Hindson, 1995). The two had totally different curricula, because each system of education supported its own culture, language and “philosophies of education” (Hindson, 1995, p. 329). In two years time, Vanuatu will mark three decades since gaining independence from the British and French, but still their colonial influences hang over the system of education. In 1993, there were 289 primary, 18 lower secondary and three upper secondary schools in the country, but only two bi-lingual lower secondary schools (Hindson, 1995). To present a rough idea how many resources would need to be duplicated in order to fulfil this dual system of education, Table 5.2 gives numbers of schools, enrolments by languages and levels of education for 1993 (current information with language-based details is unavailable).

<u>Table 5.2: Schools by languages and levels of education 1993</u>						
Language	Level of education and enrolments					
	Primary schools		Lower secondary schools		Upper secondary schools	
	Numbers	Enrolment	Numbers	Enrolment	Numbers	Enrolment
Francophone	116	11,532	4	1570	1	121
Anglophone	173	16,677	12	2657	2	340
Bi-lingual	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Source: Adopted from (Hindson, 1995)						

The country's EMP has identified "the duplications driven by requirements of the dual system" as another reason for the education system being costly (Vanuatu, 1999, p. 68). At the same time, while this problem has been identified, the Master Plan also intended to introduce vernacular languages in pre-schools as a medium of teaching in rural areas and *Bislama* in urban areas, based on the choice of school committees (Vanuatu, 1999). This could bring further complications into the system but may also enhance the cultural diversity by helping to maintain and revive some traditional languages.

Despite all these challenges, the government of Vanuatu's long-term goal is to provide universal primary education and equitable access to secondary schools (VNSO, 2002a). In 2004, there were 441 primary and 74 secondary schools with enrolments of 39,000 and 10,600 students respectively, and 2,646 teachers in total (DESP, 2006; Vanuatu, 2006). By the end of 2005, as part of EMP, there were 437 primary schools, with 65 percent of the students enrolled in Anglophone and 35 percent in Francophone schools (Vanuatu, 2005). Among these there were two government-cum-private and eight Technical/Vocational Secondary schools, which provide vocational training (Vanuatu, 1999). In addition, there are post secondary providers, who play a great role in education and human resource development, such as the Vanuatu Agriculture College, Nurses' Training School, and Maritime College, plus the School of Law, Emalus Campus, of the University of the South Pacific and centres in other regions of the country.

According to the national statistics, there was some progress in achieving universal primary education in Vanuatu between 1989 and 2005, as the net enrolment ratio in primary education (6 -12 years) saw a gradual increase from 74 percent in 1989 to 78 percent in 1999 (DESP, 2006; Vanuatu, 2005). However, the Priorities and Action Agenda (PAA) has pointed out that "progress towards universal primary education has been slower than hoped for", because significant increases in enrolment have not occurred during the recent years and high drop out rates remain a concern, especially in the rural areas (DESP, 2006, p. 37).

In Vanuatu, early childhood education is mainly run by communities and is not covered under the formal education system. Formal primary and secondary education is provided by the government, churches and communities (Vanuatu, 2005). However, a literature survey of government documents and information from the field revealed that there is no free education at any level in Vanuatu. Moreover, quality and accessibility problems are major concerns for parents and educational officials. The quality problem mainly comes from the lack of adequately-trained teachers, resources, and facilities, especially in rural areas. In general, the student teacher ratio is high at both levels, primary and secondary, and in rural areas in particular (Vanuatu, 1999, 2000b, 2005). The following also contribute to the poor quality of education in Vanuatu to a very large extent, especially in rural areas:

- ***Lack of proper housing for teachers*** is the main problem in recruiting and retaining teachers in the rural areas. The field data revealed that parents largely provide accommodation for the teachers;
- ***Poor maintenance of schools*** is one of the main causes of poor quality education. The poor condition of school buildings is common in the rural areas because, according to the EMP and education officials, very few schools receive regular funding for maintenance;
- ***Poorly provided school furniture and teaching aid*** are great concerns for teachers and parents. Many schools lack adequate furniture or teaching materials, where students can comfortably sit in the class and teachers can deliver quality lessons, and
- ***Inadequately provided water and toilet facilities*** are other factors impacting on low quality education. According to EMP, some head teachers and supervisors, many schools in rural areas do not have clean water supplies or appropriate toilet facilities and some have no toilets at all (Vanuatu, 1999).

Affordability is the key problem for accessibility to education in Vanuatu, especially for rural communities who mainly rely on subsistence agricultural products. In practice, education in Vanuatu is available for people who can contribute financially or otherwise. The government policy in this respect is:

that parents should pay school fees for children attending secondary schools. Nominally, attendance of children at primary school is free,

however, in practice, in almost all primary schools, parents do have to pay financial contributions to the school (Vanuatu, 1999).

In addition to financial contributions, in-kind contributions entail parents' participation in *kermesses* or the sale of produce and maintenance and cleaning of the school. Here is an anecdote from a head teacher of an island school:

The government provides very little money to run a school. I have been getting only Vatu 20,000 [US \$ 216 (at the exchange rate of March 2008)] per annum for my school, which can be considered nothing to run a school. So I manage the school with the help of community support, they are very supportive. They provide cash and sometimes food crops which the school will sell in exchange for money. The community also provides accommodation for teachers (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006).

Approximate total contributions by parents in the local currency, Vatu (VUV), for the schooling of their children at both primary and secondary levels are given in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Parents' contributions to education as cash and in-kind		
Level of education	Description of the contributions	Value in (VUV)
Primary	Direct financial contribution to run school (expenses and insurance)	600
	In-kind contributions through participation in <i>Kermesses</i> or the sale of produce and other activities to raise funds for the school	2,200
	Approximate total per student	2,800
Secondary	Fees (this includes boarding fees which are required for over 80% of students attending secondary schools)	15,000 - 21,000
	Approximate contributions for school supplies	3,000
	Indirect contributions in-kind	3,000
	Approximate total per student	21,000 – 27,000
Source: Information extracted from (Vanuatu, 1999) and fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006.		

According to the information provided by head-teachers, these figures do not reflect the labour that parents contribute in terms of building, maintaining, and cleaning the schools and their facilities. The total costs for primary education Vatu 2,800 and for secondary Vatu 21,000/27,000 (approximately US \$ 30 for primary and US\$ 227.00-293 for secondary, at the exchange rate of 29 April 2008), might be a small amount for people who earn enough cash, but pose a huge burden for those who live mainly from subsistence food crops.

These are the main problems for Vanuatu's slow progress in achieving universal primary education and high enrolment in both primary and secondary schooling, especially in rural areas. As discussed previously, the vast majority of the rural population live on subsistence farming, therefore, it is very difficult to earn a lump sum of money, which has discouraged most parents from sending their children to schools. The majority of the parents interviewed in the rural areas indicated that they could not afford to pay in cash even for primary education, therefore, secondary schooling is beyond their thoughts. Parents also think that sending their children to primary schooling is a waste, since they cannot afford secondary education. Similar comments were also made by head-teachers and teachers.

The government of Vanuatu has taken a number of policy measures in the EMP to address these problems, such as increasing the education component of the national budget, and strengthening partnerships with communities, NGOs, churches, and private sector and donor agencies (DESP, 2006; Vanuatu, 1999, 2000b, 2006). The government also has been working on merging some of the small schools which are close to each other, in order to cut down operational unit costs in order to invest in quality education in a more sustainable manner (Vanuatu, 1999). At the same time, the EMP also suggested decentralising operation of the educational system to the Provincial Councils. Hence, the Councils could address the problems hindering progress of education sector based on the local needs.

5.4.3 Health

Health is vitally important for the sustainable socio-economic development of any individual or society. Based on this, it has been recognised by the CRP that Vanuatu will require "a healthy population and a healthy economy" in order for prosperity and development (Vanuatu, 2006, p. 17). However, provision of healthcare facilities to a geographically-dispersed population is a challenging task when unit costs are three to four fold higher than on continental mainland states. Vanuatu, being a small developing archipelago, "presents a tremendous challenge for resource allocation and health facility distribution" (Vanuatu, 2007c, p. 10). About 80 percent of the population of the country live on widely dispersed islands. As a result, large numbers of these island communities have to travel using power boats, canoes or trucks to

access the nearest available health facility (DESP, 2006). In some cases, it may take several days' travel to reach the nearest healthcare facility (DESP, 2006).

During the Condominium era, health services were provided as two separate entities under the British and French administrations. Healthcare was also provided by different religious institutions (VNSO, 2002a). After independence, the two systems were merged and all healthcare facilities placed under government responsibility (VNSO, 2002a). There have been some improvements in the healthcare system in terms of increasing numbers of facilities and health personnel, although reportedly some 20 percent of the country's total population still live without access to health services (Vanuatu, 2007c). There are four levels of healthcare facilities, Provincial Hospitals, Health Centres, Dispensaries, and Health Aid-Posts, with one referral Central Hospital at the Port Vila. Table 5.4 presents the numbers of health facilities available in 1999 and 2005:

Table 5.4: Numbers of health facilities in Vanuatu between 1999 and 2005		
Health facilities	Year	
	1999	2005
Hospitals	5	6
Health Centres	20	32
Dispensaries	68	89
Health Aid-Posts	162	181
Source: Data from (Vanuatu, 2007c; VNSO, 2002a)		

According to the 2005 data, the country's six hospitals had a total of 480 bed capacity, and healthcare was provided by a total of 40 medical doctors, 308 nurses, 48 midwives and six dentists (Vanuatu, 2007c). In addition, there were some private health care providers. However, during the field visit to Tanna Island, the researcher noted there were only two doctors in the Tafea Provincial Hospital, Lenakel, and no specialists available at the time.

In general, Vanuatu has achieved some significant improvements in health indicators, such as life expectancy and infant mortality, but health issues still remain a great concern in most remote areas of the country, especially in Torba and Tafea. Infant mortality rates are the highest in these two regions compared to others and, as

well, Torba's average life expectancy at birth is the lowest (Vanuatu, 2005) (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5: Disparities with the provinces in key health indicators (2005)						
Indicators	Province					
	Malampa	Penama	Sanma	Shefa	Tafea	Torba
Crude Birth Rate (CBR)	26.0	30.0	29.0	26.0	31.0	30.0
Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)	24	23	29	21	34	39
Mortality Rate 1-4 years	5	5	7	4	9	11
Average Life Expectancy at Birth	65.8	67.0	67.1	69.6	68.4	59.3
One year olds immunised for Measles (2003)	44	77	84	63	76	30
Source: from (Vanuatu, 2005, p. 26)						

The figures in the Table 5.5 reveal the extent of the central government outreach and the limitations and capacities of the Provincial governments. Nevertheless, the government is working to improve health services throughout the country by adopting a Master Health Services Plan 2004-2009.

5.5 Physical infrastructure

Physical infrastructure is vitally important for the development of any society, regardless of geographic characteristics, size and culture. Even in traditional societies, socio-economic utilities and infrastructure networks existed, as appropriate for the society. Today, in this technologically advanced world, no society can restrict its life to food crops, suggesting that people are happy with and can live on what they have in their gardens. The reality is that these people desperately want access to the basic needs that are required to keep life going. Accessibility to basic necessities is based on financial affordability, which will eventually have a positive impact on poverty and vulnerability. For all these, provision of physical infrastructure is critically important, therefore, this section outlines the condition of Vanuatu's interrelated infrastructures of electricity, transport and communication, and water and sanitation.

5.5.1 Electricity

Electricity in Vanuatu is generated mainly by thermal generators, about 90 percent, and the remaining 10 percent by hydroelectric power from the Sarakata Hydroelectric Scheme in Santo (Mourgues, 2005). Electricity in Vanuatu is provided by a private company UNELCO, which has a monopoly over the services provided. The HIES-2006 mentions various suppliers, such as UNELCO, Provincial government, Community-owned and Household-owned electricity, but the last three cover only 23, 114 and 260 households, respectively (VNSO, 2002b). Electricity, therefore, is expensive due to the monopolisation and small scale of the market, and this has been identified as one of the constraints for business development in Vanuatu (Mourgues, 2005; Vanuatu, 2002). A two tier tariff system based on income has been introduced for domestic consumers to ease the hardship of the payment (Mourgues, 2005; Vanuatu, 2002). Electricity is well-provided in urban areas, but still the vast majority of rural households are out of reach of the electricity supply.

The *Vanuatu Poverty Survey 1998* found that almost all poor households had no access to electricity and mainly used hurricane lamps for lighting and wood or coconut shells for cooking (VNSO, 2002b). According to the *Statistical Year Book – 2002*, only 19 percent of the households in Vanuatu had electricity, 14 percent of urban households but only five percent in rural areas (VNSO, 2002a). According to the HIES-2006, a total of 26 percent of the households had electricity in 2006, 18 percent in urban and eight percent in rural areas (VNSO, 2007d). The majority of the rural households, about 85 percent (27, 839 households) use kerosene lamps for their lighting and the remainder use electricity (8%), wood or coconut shells (nearly 4%), Coleman lamps (1%), candles (0.4%), or gas (0.04%), while about two percent of the households use either some other sources of lighting or have no lighting at all (VNSO, 2007d), see Figure 5.5.

Most of the village communities I visited in Tanna had no electricity. Even some of the households within the town had no electricity, as shown by the following story of a woman from Tanna who runs a home-made food outlet adjacent to her home:

I am running this outlet to earn some cash so I can educate my children. If I do not run this small business then there are no other alternatives to earn cash and save it for my children's education. I use kerosene lamps for lighting at home because electricity is very expensive but I have to use electricity to run my business and I am using it as minimally as I can. I am using a pre-paid card of Vatu 1000 for this lighting [just one bulb] so I know how much I am using and I can control it. I also want to use electricity at home so my children can study at night easily, but I cannot afford it (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006).

In order to improve the standard of life for rural communities, it is crucially important to expand the supply of electricity to the outer islands through Provincial governments so that services can be sustained. This would help to resolve the problems of land required for hydroelectric and other alternative sources of energy, because the Councils would have easy access to tribal leaders and could negotiate frequently. Hydroelectricity and micro level solar energy have been tried in Vanuatu through external funded projects, and other renewable sources of energy such as geothermal and wind have also been explored (GEF and UNDP, 2004). In the past years, the government of Vanuatu implemented three externally funded hydroelectricity projects, the Sarakata Hydroscheme, which is now operational and selling electricity to UNELCO, and the Epau Hydro Power Scheme and Hydro Power Project which are still pending (Vanuatu, 2002). Since 1992, an Energy Unit within the Ministry of Lands, Geology, Mines, Energy, Environment and Water

Resources, has been involved in some eight solar energy projects in the outer islands, and other organisations involved in development of the communities also have several solar energy projects, but mainly these have not been very successful due to technical problems and lack of technicians (GEF and UNDP, 2004). The Energy Unit renewable energy programmes for rural electrification are funded through the Sarakata Special Reserve Fund (SSRF), which is generated by selling electricity to UNELCO. The Unit also has tried to establish Rural Development Committees in the rural communities to run and maintain the Unit's electrification programmes, but so far they have not been effective (GEF and UNDP, 2004). Nonetheless, improved accessibility to electricity would have a positive impact on people's lives and productivity, which could eventually contribute to the growth of the economy at both micro and macro levels.

5.5.2 Transport and communications

As Vanuatu is an archipelago, an improved and viable transport network is a prerequisite for the development of the country in general, and the outer islands in particular. Without an effective transport network, the disparity between urban and rural will remain because the rural community will be disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic opportunities. Moreover, a regular inter-island sea transport system is crucially important, because nearly 80 percent of the population live on geographically dispersed islands and rely heavily on sea transportation for trade and domestic travelling (EU and Vanuatu, 2002; UN, 2002; Vanuatu, 2002; VNSO, 2002a). Although a regular transport network is lacking in the country, sea transport has been the "main means of transporting export crops and produce from the outer islands to the main markets of Port Vila and Luganville" (VNSO, 2002a, p. 103).

The literature survey and fieldwork information reveal that the sea transport network is not reliable, the boats are old, services are irregular and unscheduled, especially to small islands (EU and Vanuatu, 2002). This poor condition of sea transportation has been regarded as the main constraint to development and a cause of hardship for the island communities (VNSO, 2002a); people say, oh, don't travel to outer islands, especially to the small islands, by sea because you might be trapped there for days! (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006).

There may be less demand for improved harbour and jetties from the small island communities of Vanuatu because these people live mainly on subsistence agriculture. Large scale fishing has not been a tradition of the community, and subsistence fishing is undertaken by traditional canoes. The *Vanuatu Infrastructure Master Plan* also has not mentioned this area except for the ports and wharves already existing on large islands (Vanuatu, 2002). The archipelago has 22 public ports and wharves, of which the two urban ports and wharves, Port Vila and Luganville, are the most important (Vanuatu, 2002; VNSO, 2002a). However, some form of harbours and jetties would be required in the small outer-islands in order to develop an improved inter-island sea transportation network.

In the same vein, land and air transportation are no less important for Vanuatu, since some islands are large and inhabitants widespread in small communities. Improved air travel is important because it will be a backbone for expansion of tourism and trade, especially the air freighting of agricultural products to the market in a fresh and timely manner. The Government of Vanuatu provides air transport through the its two companies, Air Vanuatu and Vanair, originally the New Hebrides Airways of the Anglo-French Condominium (VNSO, 2002a). Air Vanautu operates international flights and Vanair runs domestic flights as independent companies. The archipelago has three International Airports, Bauerfield of Efate, Pekoa of Luganville and White Grass of Tanna, operated by Airports Vanuatu Limited (AVL), and 26 Outer-island Airstrips which are contracted out to the AVL by the government of Vanuatu (EU and Vanuatu, 2002; VNSO, 2002a). International and domestic airfares are comparatively high (VNSO, 2002a) for a community in which the majority of the population, nearly 75 percent, rely on subsistence agricultural products grown on traditional 'gardenings'. The field data revealed that high price of domestic airfare is a big concern for most of the island populations who earn hardly any cash.

Vanuatu has a number of large islands with widespread communities. Land transportation, therefore, is a necessity for trade and domestic travelling. The archipelago has about 1,766 km of roads maintained by the Public Works Department at Central government level and 225 km of road controlled by Provincial governments (DESP, 2006). Although roading is available on all the islands,

according to the *EU and Vanuatu Joint Report* (2002) sealed roads are available only in the two urban areas, Efate and Santo, and the rest are gravel or dirt roads. The condition of these roads is bad due to the poor quality of construction and maintenance (DESP, 2006; EU and Vanuatu, 2002; Vanuatu, 2002; VNSO, 2002a). The poor quality of this important network will continue to hinder the socio-economic development of the country.

Telecommunication is critically important for Vanuatu, as an archipelagic state with numbers of island communities dispersed over a vast sea area, and highly prone to natural disasters. Telecommunication can play a great role, on the one hand, to reduce vulnerability and poverty and, on the other, to increase socio-economic opportunities for the remote and isolated communities. A reliable telecommunication system would have an “important spill over effects to other sectors of the economy, helping in reducing the cost of production, efficient delivery of public services and reduction of poverty” (VNSO, 2002a, p. 105). Telephones, Internet, TV and radio can be very effective to inform isolated communities about predicted natural events and weather forecasts, and also for developmental awareness campaigns, education and in case of emergencies.

Telecom Vanuatu Limited (TVL), a joint-venture by the government of Vanuatu, France Telecom Group and Cable and Wireless with equal shares, provides telephone and Internet services to the country (Telecom Vanuatu, 2008). By 2006, the archipelago had 6,994 fixed lines, representing a telephone density of about 12 connections per 100 people based on the 1999 Population Census (DESP, 2006). The use of mobile phones is growing faster than fixed lines because of their “affordable initial cost and quick supply” (VNSO, 2002a). There were some 3,372 mobile connections in 2002 (VNSO, 2002a), which had grown to about 15,400 mobile phone subscribers as of January 2006 (DESP, 2006).

The TVL had exclusive rights to provide domestic and international services till 2012 (DESP, 2006). However, this monopoly was severed when a new provider Digicel (Vanuatu) Limited entered the market on Friday, 21st March 2008, creating a competitive market at least for mobile phone services in Vanuatu (Raymond, 2008).

This will, eventually, reduce the prices and improve the coverage throughout the country since the company has to cover 85 percent of the population within the next 18 months under the contract (Raymond, 2008). Edward Natapei, the Minister for Infrastructure and Public Utilities, in his speech on this occasion expressed that “this will be the first time that many rural areas have received reliable telephone communications and become properly connected to the rest of the country” (Raymond, 2008). Nevertheless, the researcher’s personal observations revealed that telephone usage is not very common in rural areas due to the limited accessibility of public telephones, on the one hand, and inaffordability of private lines, on the other.

In Vanuatu, radio and TV services are available but radio is more commonly used in rural communities and TV is not common yet. Although people in most parts of the rural area have problems in receiving radio transmission, Vanuatu provides FM, AM and SW throughout the country and programmes are provided in three languages, Bislama, English, and French (DESP, 2006; VNSO, 2002a). There are three newspapers, *Vanuatu Daily Post*, *the Ni-Vanuatu* and *Port Vila Presse*. The last two are published once weekly, on Thursdays and Saturdays. However, print media are not widely available in the rural areas.

5.5.4 Water and sanitation

Provision of clean and proper water and sanitation is very important for the wellbeing of people and a basic necessity for a healthy life. Access to safe drinking water and an environmentally friendly sewerage system can be a challenge for any archipelagic state because of the high unit cost for the provision of services. However, Vanuatu is fortunate in having a great number of freshwater streams and rivers which can be utilised to supply water. For example, the water supply to Port Vila is extracted from the Tagabe River, and Luganville water comes from a well built on the coral limestone by US forces in 1940s (VNSO, 2002a).

The urban (Port Vila and Luganville) water supply is operated by UNELCO which has a discounted special contract until 2032, though the water supply itself is owned by the government (Mourgues, 2005). Malekula and Tanna also have urban water supply systems (VNSO, 2002a). However, it requires sound policies with great

political commitment in order that the respective authorities at all levels, national and provincial, can deliver services to the people in a sustainable manner.

The Vanuatu Poverty Survey 1998 (VPS) (VNSO, 2002b) reported that improved water supply and housing were the most common needs identified by rural communities, whereas housing and land were identified by urban population. The VPS also found that water supply was listed as the second most common problem in the rural areas, while housing was the second biggest urban problem (VNSO, 2002b). The survey also noted “a high number of poor households relying on easily contaminated sources of water or having to share water resources” (VNSO, 2002b, p. vii). There is a disparity between urban and rural areas in terms of provision of water supply. More than 49 percent of the urban households have piped water directly connected to their houses, whereas the main rural sources of water are rivers and springs (Vanuatu, 2005). Table 5.6 depicts the water sources used by the households in both rural and urban areas in 1999 and 2006.

Table 5.6: Number of Vanuatu households by source of water supply: Urban, rural and total						
Water sources	Rural		Urban		Total	
	1999	2006	1999	2006	1999	2006
Piped Water	2,378	4,402	3,936	5,259	6,314	9,301
Piped water Outside (shared with Community/households)	5,426	5,578	2,270	2,642	7,696	8,221
Standpipe (Private)	n/a	1,882	n/a	202	n/a	2,083
Standpipe (Shared with household/Community)	1,974*	4,264	97*	617	2,071	4,881
Household Tank	4,449	3,398	617	177	5,066	3,574
Community Tank	5,184	2,782	287	18	5,471	2,800
Well	2,500	5,424	365	537	2,865	5,961
Spring	2,019	2,115	24	34	2,043	2,150
River	2,780	3,295	69	23	2,849	3,317
Other	1,447**	946	593**	76	2040	1,023
Total numbers of households	28,157	34,086	8,258	9,585	36,415	43,312
Source: (Vanuatu, 2000a; VNSO, 2007d). Note: * the figure is under “Village Standpipe”, ** Included figures under “Not Stated”						

According to Table 5.6, the majority of the rural households used shared facilities, piped water and community tanks, both in 1998 and 2006, although in 2006, the numbers of households using community water tanks declined and the use of well water increased. Water supply, therefore, is a great concern in rural areas, which

needs to be addressed strategically. Some of the NGOs are involved in developing water supplies in collaboration with local communities. The government has begun initiatives to develop water supply systems in villages with the support of the water section in the Department of Geology and Mines and NGOs (DESP, 2006).

According to the MDGs report of Vanuatu, sanitation facilities have increased in urban compared with rural areas, resulting in improved sanitation (Vanuatu, 2005). The 1999 Census (Vanuatu, 2000a) found that more than 40 percent of the rural households had no shower or place to wash, whereas only 10 percent of the urban households had the same problem. The VPS findings show that almost all poor households use latrine type toilets, either private or shared (Vanuatu, 2000a, p. vii). Table 5.7 gives the type of toilet facilities used by households in the rural and urban areas in 1999 and 2006.

Table 5.7. Number of Vanuatu households by type of toilet facilities: Rural, urban and total						
Types of toilet facilities	Rural		Urban		Total	
	1999	2006	1999	2006	1999	2006
Flush toilet (Private)	1,009	1,405	3,461	4,682	4,470	6,087
Flush toilet (shared)	266	332	1,257	1,820	1,523	2,151
Water sealed toilet (Private)	1,993	1,752	419	472	2,412	2,224
Water sealed toilet (Shared)	252	280	402	438	654	718
Ventilated improved pit toilet (VIP) (Private)	7,626	13,020	633	985	8,259	14,004
Ventilated improved pit toilet (VIP) (Shared)	677	2,226	301	349	978	2,575
Pit latrine (Private)	13,605	10,303	1,039	445	14,644	10,747
Pit latrine (shared)	n/a	3,791	490	390	1,740	4,181
None	n/a	620	256*	6	1,469	625
Total numbers of households	25,428	33,729	8,258	9,587	36,415	43,312
Source:(Vanuatu, 2000a; VNSO, 2007d). Note: * Included figures under “Not Stated”						

According to the Table the majority of the rural households use VIP and Pit latrines whereas urban households tend to use flush toilets. This study’s field observations, seven years after the 1999 Census, found that most of the rural households still use poorly installed and maintained pit latrines which are health hazards. During a field visit to a village the researcher witnessed the unhygienic conditions which are highly likely to lead to the transmission of communicable diseases.

5.6 Poverty and vulnerability

The terms poverty and vulnerability are seen differently, based on the nature of the condition and how they are perceived by locals. In general, the terms do not have a standard set definition. Therefore, there has been on-going debate among government officials, locals, donors, and NGOs and sometimes the terms are used interchangeably (UN, 2002). There is limited information on poverty and its related issues, due to the problems that often arise in defining poverty in the context of Vanuatu (Vanuatu, 2005). Nevertheless, the national statistics, VPS 1998 (VNSO, 2002b), the 2002 Participatory Hardship Assessment (PHA) (ADB, 2003), and HEIS 2006 (VNSO, 2007d), show that the vast majority of people in rural areas of Vanuatu live below the poverty line. It has been estimated that 40 percent of all Ni-Vanuatu and 50 percent of the rural population have incomes of less than US\$1 per day (ADB, 2003). The VPS also reported that almost 50 percent of the poor households cannot afford to buy food or other basic goods and services (VNSO, 2002b). Urban areas also have poverty, and in fact, the urban poverty is more severe in some cases than the rural (Vanuatu, 2005; VNSO, 2002b). However, the literature survey and fieldwork data show that the majority of urban poor are outer island migrants who have come seeking jobs and other socio-economic opportunities.

Absolute poverty in terms of hunger and destitution does not exist as seen in other parts of the world, or may not be an issue in Vanuatu (Abbott & Pollard, 2004; ADB, 2003; Vanuatu, 2005). As in other Pacific nations, island or rural communities rely heavily on subsistence agriculture, and also have a tradition of caring for each other and sharing among members of the community, family and clan, which is called traditional or spiritual mutual assistance (Abbott & Pollard, 2004; Campbell, 1998). Therefore, a level of income or monetary value set \$1 a day may not suffice as an indicator for the poverty line in Vanuatu (UN, 2002).

Poverty and hardship in the context of Pacific Developing Member Countries (PMDCs) have been defined as “inadequate levels of sustainable human development through access to essential public goods and services and access to income opportunities” (Abbott & Pollard, 2004, p. ix). As Vanuatu is part of the PMDCs, this accurately describes the very situation of the archipelago. The

definition also corresponds to the findings discussed in the previous sections about Vanuatu's socio-economic climate. In the Vanuatu context, two categories of poor are identified; firstly, those who have always struggled to survive or meet basic needs and, secondly, those who are poor because they do not possess enough substitutes for their survival in a time of a crisis such as when the household's breadwinner falls sick or when a weather-related event or a natural disaster destroys the food crops (UN, 2002). The majority of rural communities fall into either of these categories. According to the VPS 1998, 90 percent of poor households were involved in some form of agricultural activity and it also found that "rural households are more at risk of poverty than urban ones" (VNSO, 2002b, p. vii).

Vanuatu, being geographically located in the 'ring of fire' and a very weather-sensitive zone in the 'cyclone belt' in the Pacific, is highly vulnerable to natural disasters such as tropical cyclones, floods and droughts (McKenzie, et al., 2005; Vanuatu, 2005, 2007b). Vanuatu also often suffers from volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis (Vanuatu, 2007b). Due to its geological nature, fragmented communities over numbers of small islands, diseconomies of scale and limited financial and technical capacity, the archipelago has been recognised as the one of the most vulnerable countries in the world (Commonwealth, 1997c; Vanuatu, 2007b). Limited ability to mobilise socio-economic resources also makes Vanuatu vulnerable (UN, 2002), as does increasing environmental vulnerability due to deforestation for logging and cattle grazing, for example (UN, 2002).

Together with these factors, the outer island communities are even more vulnerable because of their limited socio-economic opportunities and poorly provided basic services. Moreover, the rural communities are susceptible to natural disasters because the majority of shelters are made out of bush materials, such as bamboo walls and thatch roofs (UN, 2002; VNSO, 2002b). The dual vulnerability of the communities, especially rural communities, being prone to natural disasters and lingering poverty – which has not been accepted widely among the members of the communities yet – increases the severity of the impact of natural disasters on people's lives and livelihoods. Therefore, there is a need in Vanuatu to address the

two phenomena, poverty and vulnerability, through sound policies and enhanced governance systems at both central and provincial levels.

5.6.1 Measures taken to reduce poverty and vulnerability

Traditionally, Vanuatu has had a life-style of subsistence and agricultural reliance, which has very little to do with money. However, this has been changing due to the structural shifts in societal needs and wants within the make-up of development (Abbott & Pollard, 2004). Vanuatu has the resilience to cope with natural events and the ability to recover from devastations through traditional and external relief efforts (Vanuatu, 2007b), as well as community efforts. A paramount tribal chief describes how they used to respond to disastrous events traditionally:

When such an event occurred I would call every member of the community and ask them to work together, bring all foods they obtain to the communal place, Nakamal, from where we would ration out the food until we accomplish the cleaning and rebuilding. We also helped among the tribes, communities and villages. All happened voluntarily. The village emergency system operated from the Nakamal throughout the period and it was quick and fast. Today things are changing and people wait for the government or until relief assistance comes and it is more devastating (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006).

This traditionally and spiritually bound mutual assistance in the form of community and kinship obligations has been identified as an area needing to be promoted and consolidated in contemporary disaster management, in order to increase the resilience within island communities in the Pacific (Campbell, 1998).

In the past three decades, since the archipelago gained independence from the colonial authorities, the government of Vanuatu has taken various measures to address the two phenomena, poverty and vulnerability, within its capacity, and beyond through external assistance. Institutional and policy measures are undertaken by constant reviewing of the governance system, *Decentralisation Act*, and introducing new policy strategies such as Comprehensive Reform Programme (CRP) to address socio-economic problems, which eventually could help to reduce poverty and vulnerability.

Vanuatu has aimed to address the disparities between urban and rural areas by including a *Decentralisation Act* in the Constitution and establishing Provincial Governments from the very beginning of independence. Initially, there were 11 Provincial governments until 1992, when the system was reviewed and reduced to six Provinces. Since 1997, the government of Vanuatu has implemented a Comprehensive Reform Programme (CRP) with the assistance of external donors, especially the ADB, which functionally began with ministerial capacity, the Ministry of Comprehensive Reform. The CRP's initial focus has been concentrated on "strategies for economic development and improving governance" and introduced *Priorities and Action Agenda* (PAA) as a device for development planning (Vanuatu, 2005, p. 45).

The CRP established a Commission with the mandate of reviewing the country's decentralised system. The Commission reviewed the system and submitted a comprehensive report on the findings of the review, consisting of two volumes, to the government in 2003. Since then some policy changes have occurred in terms of devolving more power and authority to the Provincial governments but locals have so far seen little change in their effectiveness. Mainly, control and fiscal leverage remain in the hands of the central authorities.

The government also has introduced a mechanism of Rural Economic Development Initiatives (REDI) to incorporate provincial level planning and development policy priorities into the PAA (Vanuatu, 2005). However, according to the local officials and even central authorities, this 'bottom up' approach remains yet to be achieved. The REDI is not very effective due to the lack of funding and technical capacity at the provincial levels, especially central government's reluctance to deploy adequate funding to the local authorities to implement projects.

Establishing the National Council of Chiefs (NCC) and giving the Council constitutional privileges is a vital step that Vanuatu has taken in order to incorporate and integrate the customary system into the modern democratic values. The convergence of traditional chieftainship and modern democracy may enhance the system at one point in the long-term. The NCC may be the most effective institution

to help reach the most disadvantaged people in order to address their societal problems as well as to resolve tribal and village problems. However, according to the locals and chiefs, there is a need to enhance the NCC by building up its human resource capacity, becoming involved in development programmes, and linking the Council to the local chiefs through increasing genuine relationships.

The government of Vanuatu has established a National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) with the mandate of coordination among all stakeholders. It also manages the strategies and policies of the National Disaster Committee, acts as an advisory body to the Committee and establishes communication networks between all partners of the disaster management, as well as developing disaster education programmes and organising disaster-related training exercises (Vanuatu, 2000c). The NDMO published its first ever Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management National Action Plan (2006-2016) with assistance of SOPAC and the European Union in 2007. However, during fieldwork in 2006, the researcher found that the NDMO was functioning very poorly. The Office had only three officers working for entire nation, with very poor facilities located in the National Police Commission. Reportedly, the NDMO has no extensions at the Provincial levels (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006).

5.7 Civil society

Civil society in Vanuatu can be considered in terms of three main groups, traditional leadership, religious institutions, and NGOs (UN, 2002). All three groups play a great role in the society. The traditional leaders, the chiefs, are involved in maintaining peace and law and order in society as a whole. For example, the chiefs were used to resolve the civil unrest that occurred after the crisis of the National Provident Fund, in 1999 (UN, 2002). In rural areas, especially tribal villages, the chiefs are the principal referral authority for societal problems. The chiefs are the middle-men who reach out to the people and play a role between both the government and communities. The chiefs are, therefore, a key component of civil society in Vanuatu, and should be given great consideration, by involving them in all community development activities, and development policy and decision-makings.

The religious institutions in Vanuatu played a great role in providing social services, running schools and health care facilities in the pre-independence era. Although the government has taken control over most of these social services after independence, these institutions still run schools, clinics and other social development activities. The government of Vanuatu even today considers that partnerships with churches are important for the development of the country, as highlighted in the Educational Master plan (Vanuatu, 1999).

NGOs in Vanuatu have long been involved in the socio-economic development of the society, especially in rural areas. Without the tremendous efforts of NGOs and their human resources and financial and technical contributions, the government would not be able to achieve what it has in terms of providing socio-economic services (UN, 2002). The Vanuatu Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (VANGO) is the national umbrella of NGOs in Vanuatu. There were some 70 member NGOs affiliated to VANGO in 1995 (UN, 2002). The number of NGOs has been increasing constantly and, as of March 2005, there were over 80 member NGOs reportedly associated with VANGO, including Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Councils of Chiefs, International NGOs, Religious Organisations, Rural Training Centres, Small Business Associations, Sports Associations, and Unions. There were over 700 NGOs under the VANGO umbrella in 2007, but of these only some 100 NGOs were registered (Jerety, 2007). VANGO has a contractual partnership agreement with the government, which was signed in 2004 (World Bank, 2006a). Although there is a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the government and VANGO, still the Association does not get funding from the government for its activities, according to VANGO officials (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). VANGO and its affiliated NGO members are largely involved with constitutional governance (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). VANGO's mapping of the governance system of Vanuatu outlines three fundamentals of governance – Constitutional, Traditional, and Religious – and VANGO's perception is that the three should go hand in hand. According to VANGO, a holistic approach would be required for a successful Vanuatu and no one aspect should be isolated from others (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). Basically, the two systems, traditional and religious, are taken care of by the previous two stakeholders, chiefs and

religious institutions, but the government should take all three on board for the benefit of the country as a whole.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter began with a brief introduction of Vanuatu and the geographical and historical background of the archipelago. This was followed by a deliberation of the governance system and its functions, both at national and provincial levels. Then discussions covered the socio-economic situation and infrastructure of the country, both in urban and rural communities. It also assessed the state of poverty and vulnerability at the national and local levels and discussed the main factors of the two phenomena. Moreover, it reviewed the historical background of the civil society and its role in addressing poverty and vulnerability. Based on what has been discussed, it can be argued that, although Vanuatu's socio-economic situation has progressed, still the majority of the population in general, and rural communities in particular, are living far below their expectations in terms of accessibility to socio-economic goods and services. Indeed, people are struggling to survive on what they have on their gardens because their options are so limited.

This reveals that the functional arrangement of the governance system is not working in favour of the majority of the archipelago's population and their wellbeing. However, this does not imply that the concept of a decentralised system of governance is not appropriate to address Vanuatu's problems in theory. The problems of the concept lie within its practicality and design, as well as the political commitments. As discussed earlier, the state in Vanuatu is regarded as 'weak' and 'thin' due to the communal control over certain critical aspects, such as land, and the influence of chiefs on their tribal communities. Therefore, it is argued that the government is incapable of spreading its power to the regions, hence the system is relatively centralised, known as 'passive' decentralisation. Comments from field interviews reflect this argument. Based on the comments from the major informants and documents survey, it is clear that decentralisation has not been fully implemented in Vanuatu, and governance has been functioning by and large as a centralised system in real terms. The system, therefore, is implemented improperly. Now the question is, what are the differences between the two systems discussed in

both chapter four and this one? The following chapter presents a comparative analysis of the two case studies, the Maldives and Vanuatu, through the people's perceptions.

Chapter 6

Governance and Vulnerability in the Maldives and Vanuatu through People's Perception: A Comparative Analysis

6.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters the thesis looked at vulnerability in the contexts of the Maldives and Vanuatu and discussed associated issues, in particular the role and responsibilities of government to address these. The discussions were largely based on secondary data backed up by primary data, including fieldwork observations. Government documents and national statistics can be manipulated by the authorities to portray a preferred profile of the state, which may not adequately represent the real life of the people. A critical analysis provides a better way of assessing the effectiveness of the system of governance. Therefore, it is important to combine the stories people tell, including their perceptions about everyday life, and their observations should be treated as paramount. For this particular purpose, the field research in the Maldives covered 67²⁷ interviews and 20 group discussions in the in-depth fieldwork in Raa and Shaviyani atolls, including officials from central government, members of NGOs and CBOs and individual from the islands, atolls and Malé (see chapter 2 and Appendices II and III). In Vanuatu the researcher conducted 58 interviews, including small group discussions, with officials from government and non-government organisations, tribal communities, chiefs, individual farmers, fishermen, taxi and bus drivers, and university students (see chapter 2 and Appendix IV).

This thesis mainly focuses on the people and the quality of their lives: this can only be fully appreciated when events and social phenomena are seen through their eyes (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Silverman, 2005; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). To fully understand the quality of life it is important to view 'governance and vulnerability', and 'poverty and development' as closely interconnected social phenomena. In this chapter the thesis will look at the concepts

²⁷ This does not include interviews and discussions conducted in the preliminary trips in the Maldives, see Appendix I.

of ‘governance’, ‘vulnerability’, ‘development’, and ‘civil society’ and related themes through the perceptions of the people in the Maldives and Vanuatu. The discussions will also be supported by secondary data. The chapter specifically focuses on how people see the existing systems and what changes they want to see in order to reduce vulnerability to adverse events in their archipelagic states. The chapter will deal mainly with field themes concentrating on the two following research questions:

- How is ‘good governance’ and ‘vulnerability’ understood by rural communities exposed to risk in small developing archipelagic states?
- What is understood by the term development in the remote island communities of developing archipelagic states?
- What is lacking in these countries and what could be remedied in order to enable them overcome such problems?

Other research questions also will be raised and discussed throughout the chapter. It will begin with a summary comparison of the two contexts, the Maldives and Vanuatu, already discussed in the previous chapters, four and five. The chapter will also provide some particularities and commonalities of the two countries for a clearer understanding of the two contexts and their challenges.

6.2 A summary comparison of the two contexts, the Maldives and Vanuatu

The Maldives and Vanuatu are from two different geo-political regions of the world. The Maldives lies in the Indian Ocean, South Asia, and is the smallest and only small island country in the region. The archipelago is neighboured by India, one of the fastest developing countries and second largest population in the world with the highest poverty and other social dilemmas, and war-torn Sri Lanka. Vanuatu is located in the South Pacific region among other several island countries and it neighbours with the Solomon Islands and New Caledonia, as well as two developed countries, Australia and New Zealand.

Although the two share some similarities in geographical nature, constraints and challenges, they also have differences in terms of geographical and ecological nature, size, numbers of islands and terrains. Table 6.1 presents some of the major

demographical, geographical and ecological facts of the two countries, the Maldives and Vanuatu.

Table 6.1: Major demographical, geographical and ecological facts of the Maldives and Vanuatu		
Country Description	Maldives	Vanuatu
Population (2006)	298,968	221,507
Urban,	103,693	44,051
Rural	195,275	177,456
Population density (per square kilometre)	996.6	18.2
Numbers of Islands	1,192	80
Inhabited	196	63
Uninhabited	996	15
Total area of Land (square kilometres)	300	12,190
EEZ (square kilometres)	859,000	710,000
Highest Point from the sea level (metres)	2.4	1,879
Source: from chapters 4 and 5.		

Although Vanuatu is smaller than the Maldives in terms of population and numbers of islands, both its total area and land masses are significantly larger, with less population density per square kilometre.

Both the Maldives and Vanuatu have small communities fragmented over numbers of islands, 196 and 63 respectively. The majority of these islands in both countries, 67.9 and 74.6 percent respectively, have fewer than 1,000 inhabitants. Moreover, more than 38 and 55 percent of the islands in the Maldives and Vanuatu respectively have a population of less than 500, see the Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Number of inhabited islands by size and class by percentage of population				
Population size (Class)	Maldives (2006)		Vanuatu (1999)	
	No. of Islands	Class %	No. of Islands	Class %
< 500	75	38.3	35	55.6
500 – 999	58	29.6	12	19.0
1,000-1,999	47	24.0	4	6.3
2,000- 4,999	12	6.1	5	7.9
5,000-9,999	3	1.5	2	3.2
> 10,000	1	0.5	5	7.9
Total	196	100	63	100
Source: Data from (MPND, 2007e; Vanuatu, 2000a)				

The majority of the islands represent, therefore, diseconomies of scale, posing challenges to the creation socio-economic opportunities. In addition, the same factor also thwarts the viable provision of socio-economic infrastructure and services to these small communities. However, Vanuatu has more islands with a population of greater than 10,000, and they are also larger in terms of land. This would seem to give some comparative advantages to Vanuatu over the Maldives in terms of viability and potentiality for investments on socio-economic development in order to address poverty and vulnerability issues. However, it all depends on political commitment and properly structured governance institutions.

6.2.1 Particularities and commonalities of the two countries

The Maldives and Vanuatu, both being archipelagos, have similar characteristics, on the one hand, in terms of geographic natures and ecological systems and administrative challenges and difficulties in providing goods and services, on the other. Similarly, the two have resource constraints, while each also has comparative advantages. All of these factors and elements have either positively or negatively affected the countries' socio-economic development. Table 6.3 presents some of the characteristics of the two countries, which represent some of their particularities and commonalities.

<u>Table 6.3: A Summary of characteristics between the Maldives and Vanuatu</u>	
Characteristics of the Maldives	Characteristics of Vanuatu
One harmonised government either through monarchy or republican system (monarchy abolished in 1968)	Three unique systems of governance in three different eras: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-colonial: tribal chieftains; 2. Colonial: Anglo-French Condominium, and 3. Post colonial: sovereign government by the people of Vanuatu
Colonised for a few brief periods; Portuguese rule for almost 15 years (1558 to 1573) British protectorate from 1887 to 1965 (not intervened internal affairs)	Jointly colonised by the British and France for 73 years from 1906 to 1980.
Culturally unified with one language (dialectal differences in southernmost atolls), and a common religion, Islam	Highest numbers of languages per head, estimating over 100 spoken languages Increasing diversity of religious institutions and religions (majority Christians and traditional beliefs)
1,192 islands divided into 26 natural atolls and 20 administrative atolls	85 islands divided into 6 Provinces for administrative purpose
Inhabited islands range from the 5.7 square kilometres of Gan island in Laamu atoll to the 0.05 square kilometres of Hathifushi island in Haa Alifu atoll.	Islands range from the 4010 square kilometres of Espiritu Santo to the 7 square kilometres of Aniwa
Low-lying coral islands with flat terrain More than 80 percent of the islands have an elevation of less than one metre above sea level Highest point above sea level is 2.4 metres, on an uninhabited island, Villingli, in the southernmost atoll, Seenu	Mainly volcanic with a mixed of mountainous and lowland terrain About 35 percent of the country is more than 300 metres above sea level Highest point is 1,879 metres on Tabwemasana with the lowest slopes greater than 20 degrees
Inhabitants are dispersed over 196 fragmented islands	Inhabitants are dispersed over 63 islands
Land owned by the state in general	Land owned by the indigenous tribes and individuals in general
Source: from chapters 4 and 5.	

These factors have an influence to a large extent on the socio-economic development of these two countries. Sometimes, some of these factors have positive impacts, as in the case of the Maldives having a unified and homogenised society. Though the islands of the archipelago are fragmented, development policy measures can be implemented easily. There would be less fear of backlash in such a society. In the case of Vanuatu, having a traditionally diverse culture and over 100 languages, it is very hard to implement common policy measures. The education system in Vanuatu is one example, which is facing problems introducing a common syllabus at the national level. Moreover, the fieldwork revealed that the NGOs involved in community development complain that publishing of awareness materials is highly expensive because, sometimes, they must be produced in multiple languages. However, this diversity may also have some positive sides for Vanuatu's development, for example it can be an attractive aspect of marketing for tourism. In

addition, culturally diverse communities may have greater capacity for tolerance. Now these aspects will be presented from people's perceptions.

6.3 Governance and its institutions

As discussed in chapters one and three, the term 'governance' is not free of complexity in terms of its definitions, or in its concept and practice. The term 'governance' has many different meanings in different contexts, so has been practised differently (Mellor & Jabes, 2004; Rhodes, 1997). As discussed previously (see chapters one and three), the term 'governance' has been defined based on individual objectives at the national and international levels. Generally speaking, the concept of governance enlightens the institutional arrangements and policies through which state, civil society and citizens interact in order to govern the society towards achieving common goals and the wellbeing of its people (Huffer & Molisa, 1999b; Mellor & Jabes, 2004; Rosenau & Czempiel, 1992). Nonetheless, there is a less complex understanding of 'governance' or 'good governance' when seen through eyes of rural island communities.

For the purpose of the study, perceptions of governance were sought from people of different levels in terms of education and awareness to see the pattern of understanding. The field data from the Maldives and Vanuatu showed that, as people have more education and awareness, their definitions become more comprehensive and more complex. This may be due to changes in the pattern of 'wants' and 'needs' because of the level of education and affluence. Generally, the more educated and prosperous, the more demands and complaints are reflected in people's perceptions because of their high expectations. Here is an anecdote from a government official in Vanuatu in this regard: "most of the people don't care about the services, mostly people who are not educated don't care about it as long as they get enough food to eat. The educated and people who have access to the services have more complaints and demands" (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). The researcher's personal and field observations revealed similar patterns amongst the people in both countries. When people have no education and awareness at all then there tends to be a pattern of carefree attitudes. They normally expressed ignorance about governance and its institutional arrangements and often said, don't know or don't bother (Fieldwork,

2005-2006). The following were the most commonly expressed understandings of ‘governance’ identified in this study:

1. The system or the system of administration [of the country];
2. A system which is able to take care of its people by providing all means of their well-being;
3. A system which reaches out to the people without any categorical exception of size, geographical nature, sex, age and class, and
4. Managing the nation in a way which facilitates all means of socio-economic opportunities to every citizen to benefit from and enjoy its resources and facilities without any deprivation (Fieldwork, Maldives and Vanuatu, 2005-2006).

The aforementioned definitions of ‘governance’ perceived by the field informants are ranked according to their educational and awareness backgrounds. Most uneducated people and those with very little awareness simply said, don’t know or don’t bother. The second category of people, those who have some knowledge, suggested the first definition and, as they became more educated, perceptions of the definition changed as the pattern of demand increased.

More interestingly, these definitions imply the existence of disparity between urban and rural islanders in terms of wellbeing and socio-economic opportunities. One can see from the definitions the demanding and rightful stress given to the areas in which they are disadvantaged. The definitions also explain the geographical nature of their environments. These meanings of governance perceived by the informants of both the Maldives and Vanuatu correspond to the definitions already given in Box 3.1 and refer to most of the elements described in Table 3.1 in chapter three.

A system is generally known as a failure or inappropriate if it is unable to achieve the common goals and wellbeing of the people. The system of governance is not good enough if it is not capable of creating socio-economic opportunities for every citizen of the state so that every one can enjoy its resources and facilities, at least proportionally. If not then it creates disparity, not only between communities on urban and rural islands but even between large and small islands. Here is a call –

while complaining of the existing disparity – from members of an island of Raa atoll in the Maldives that has a population of less than 500 inhabitants.

We are not demanding from the government for the same amount of investments on our island or to be provided with the same level of services as on larger islands, but we are asking for a proportional equity. If a larger island is entitled to obtain Rf 50 than why cannot we, the smaller islands, have Rf 10 or 20. We know that we cannot be provided with similar services to larger [islands] but we know that every island should be provided with basic services proportionately, if not equally (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 –May 2006).

Similar comments were found in the field data from other small islands in the Maldives, although there were no such demands from the rural communities of Vanuatu in general. However, a similar pattern appeared among the educated or elite groups of the rural communities in Vanuatu, such as teachers, government officials, and some of the tribal chiefs. The differences in expression reflect the levels of education and awareness among the rural communities in both countries. This indicates the importance of education of any community in bringing effective changes in the system.

There are two different systems of governance in the Maldives and Vanuatu in theory and design, but the two have similar patterns of practice in real life. The Maldives has a very rigid centralised system both in design and practice, whereas Vanuatu has a decentralised system structurally and theoretically, but in reality the entire system is controlled centrally. Table 6.4 summarises the main features of the two countries' systems of governance.

Table 6.4: A Summary of the main features of the governance systems, the Maldives and Vanuatu	
Maldives	Vanuatu
Centralised system of home-grown style with a mixed of Anglo-American form of management Atolls are administered by central government extensions placed at the atolls and islands as atoll and island offices	Decentralised system with six Provincial Council Governments
Presidential: a President elected for a five years term as the head of the state and government with absolute authority	Parliamentary: a President as the head of State and a Prime Minister as the head of government, elected for a term of four years
Single Chamber Parliament, People's <i>Majlis</i> comprising 50 members (two representative members from each of the 20 atolls and Malé, elected for a five-year term)	Single Chamber Parliament consisting of 50 members (One to seven members allocated for each of the 17 constituencies, depending on their population)
First Constitution adopted in 1932 under the	First Constitution adopted in 1980

monarchy system	
Full State sovereignty gained in 1965	Independence achieved in 1980
Source: extracted from Chapters 4 and 5.	

A question was asked in the field as to research whether the systems were effectively institutionalised to address the vulnerabilities of the island communities in both countries. The majority of the informants in the Maldives felt that the system is not effectively institutionalised for a country of such geographical nature (Fieldwork, 2005-2006). Almost 96 percent of the interviewed islanders and 99 percent of the interviewed government officials at the central and atoll levels in the Maldives believed that:

- ☐ Governance is not institutionalised effectively to reduce the people's vulnerabilities, and
- ☐ Governance is not very appropriate for the development of the socio-economic development and well-being of the people (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005- May 2006).

The remainder of the informants on the islands (some 4 percent) had no opinion on the issue and one percent of the government officials suggested that the system is not the problem, but rather the political commitment and the policy measures. They believed that the existing system has the right tiers in order to create a sound system as do decentralised systems elsewhere in the world but what is lacking is the delegation of power and political commitment to do so (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). According to these respondents, it would be a matter of delegating authority and power with adequate budgets to the atolls.

In Vanuatu, almost all of the interviewed government officials at the central and provincial levels and nearly 10 percent of the informants in rural communities (only 10 percent of rural informants had an opinion), the educated individuals and chiefs, believed that:

- ☐ Governance is structured and institutionalised appropriately to reduce vulnerabilities but not practiced effectively, and
- ☐ The system is structured appropriately and the policy measures are well designed on the paper for the development of the socio-economic development and well-being of the people but when they come to the practice they are kept in the shelves (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006).

The remainder of the interviewed rural community members, about 90 percent, do not seem to understand or care about the system. They generally say, oh, we are happy with what we have got, so we don't bother much about the politics (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). However, some chiefs felt that the system is not institutionalised properly in order to reach the most disadvantaged people, because it has excluded and isolated the village chiefs who could reach out to these people. Some of the religious officials in Vanuatu also expressed very similar views. The religious institutions, especially churches, have been playing a great role in the country in social development aspects, such as in the areas of education, awareness and health. The network of churches are deeply connected with the rural communities, therefore, they can easily reach out to the people.

The people who belong to a system can best see whether or not the system is effectively working for their development. If not, they are also the ones who can determine what changes would be required if the systems are to be institutionalised appropriately. This question was explored in the field during the interviews and group discussions with the informants in the Maldives and Vanuatu. The majority of the informants in the Maldives felt the existing system is not very appropriate for an archipelagic country like the Maldives which has numbers of dispersed communities. The majority also maintained that the system has not been very effective for the development of these communities. At the same time, a great number acknowledged that improvements have been made in socio-economic development over a long period of time, especially education and health. However, they also expounded that the improvements made in the islands could have been achieved within a shorter period and the islands more advanced by now if the system had been institutionalised more appropriately. Some 63 out of 67 interviewees in the Maldives identified the following factors as the main reasons for the system not being effective or appropriate: see Table 6.5. Nearly, six percent of the informants had no comments on the system and could not suggest any changes. These factors perceived by the informants may be overlapping or similar but the most commonly identified ones have been listed in order to show the patterns of understanding among the people.

<u>Table 6.5: Main factors identified for the system not being effective and appropriate in the Maldives</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The governance system is centralised, therefore, everything is controlled centrally;</i> 2. <i>Entire socio-economic services and activities are managed in Malé, including economic marketing and therefore islanders have to come to the capital to access those facilities, goods and services;</i> 3. <i>All plans for the development of the islands are made at the central level;</i> 4. <i>Atoll and island level managements are not engaged in socio-economic development activities in the current system but mainly in day to day administrative tasks;</i> 5. <i>In the current system the small islands, especially the most disadvantaged islands, are isolated in terms of accessibility to the socio-economic services, therefore, the islands have access to very limited benefits from centrally distributed socio-economic handouts to the atolls, and</i> 6. <i>Mainly, centrally controlled goods and services are provided based on population so the small islands are neglected</i>
Source: (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006)

The majority of these interviewees remarked that a rich and resourceful country could run dispersed communities over hundreds of islands through a centralised system. They also pointed out that the existing central system is weak because most of the resources are directed to high density islands, not the smaller islands, in order to achieve political gains. Almost all group discussions in the Maldives revealed similar remarks and factors.

Now, the question is what are the changes required if the system is to be made effective and appropriate? This crucial issue was discussed under the field theme of ‘governance and policies’ as ‘what could be the changes to improve the system and policies’. Table 6.6 summarises the main perceptions of the field informants about the necessary changes in order to enable the system to address vulnerabilities and related issues in the Maldives. There is overlap in these suggestions from informants, however, the most common perceptions from the field data have been included to show the influence of education and awareness on people’s understanding and the way they conceptualise governance.

<u>Table 6.6: People's perceptions on required changes in the system in the Maldives</u>			
	Perceptions (terms used based on understanding of informants)	Informants classifications	Common subject areas
1	<i>Decentralisation at a certain level with good communication and strong linkage to create deep understanding of the central policies</i>	Government and non-government Professionals and Graduates on atolls and Malé	Decentralisation
2	<i>Decentralisation with the capacity building through a gradual process with proper legal and institutional structure</i>		
3	<i>Decentralised system with four to five Local Governance Bodies with the delegation of power including fiscal delegation</i>		
4	<i>Decentralisation</i>	Moderately educated members of the community	
5	<i>Local governance system with environmental consideration</i>	Government and non-government Professionals and Graduates on atolls and Malé	Local government system
6	<i>Local governance system with the limitation and strong communication</i>		
7	<i>Local government system</i>	Moderately educated members of the island communities	
8	<i>A system works closely with the people</i>	Members of Island communities	A System closer to the people
9	<i>A system which brings people closer</i>		
10	<i>Give power to the locals to manage their resources</i>	Moderately educated members of the island communities/Educated and trained chiefs	Give power to local authorities
11	<i>Delegate power to the locals through a gradual process</i>	Government and non-government Professionals and Graduates on atolls and Malé / moderately educated islanders	
12	<i>A trust worthy system which has an outreach to the people</i>	Members of Island communities	A trustworthy and Outreaching system
Source: (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006)			

As it can be seen from Table 6.6, all the perceptions have common objectives – to create an effective system while empowering the rural island communities. When these perceptions are categorised into five subject areas, decentralisation, local government system, a system closer to the people, give power to the local authorities and a trustworthy and outreaching system, which also can all be seen as synonymous, it is possible to indicate the similarities in people's understanding. These five common subject areas are plotted in a graph to show the most preferred desires for change, see Figure 6.1, showing the percentages of the informants represented in each area. The majority of the people, 31 percent of the informants, suggest that a country like the Maldives would require a “decentralised” system and the second largest, 28 percent, has gone for a “local governance” system. Nevertheless, even though informants used different expressions, all of these suggestions have similar

conceptual and theoretical conclusions and they all converge at a system that would work closely with the people.

Figure 6.1: People's perceptions on required changes to the system in the Maldives

Source: Data from Table 6.6 and Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 - May 2006

In a nutshell, the bottom-line is to create a sound system which gives power to the locals to manage resources and utilities for the development of their people; hence the perceptions and suggestions represent different interpretations of one governance system, a local government system with a delegation of power, which covers all other concepts in theory.

Although Vanuatu has implemented a constitutionally decentralised system with six provincial governments, the informants in the field identified somewhat similar reasons as those in the Maldives for the system not being effective. The majority of the government officials at the central and provincial levels, educated elites and chiefs agreed about the structure of the existing system as being appropriate, but identified problems in terms of its effectiveness, the policies and practical side of the system. Here is comment from a professor from USP, in Port Vila, on the existing system in line with this argument, “decentralisation seems very limited to the provincial headquarters, not beyond them, not to the islands within the province, even if so then they are very limited” (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). The following factors have been identified as the most common hindrances in terms of

the effectiveness of Vanuatu's governance in addressing vulnerability related issues: see Table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Main factors identified for the system not being effective in Vanuatu
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Lack of human resource capacity at the provincial levels;</i> 2. <i>Confusion at the provincial level about the structure of the system as well as central policies;</i> 3. <i>Lack of involvement of the village/tribal chief in the governance system and making policy measures;</i> 4. <i>Miscommunication about the policies and mandates between the two tiers of the system, central and provincial;</i> 5. <i>Resource allocations are not made involving provincial governments;</i> 6. <i>Unequally distributed resource allocation and negligence of most distant and remote provinces, islands or communities;</i> 7. <i>Government funds are limited, therefore, less development activities are carried out at the local levels;</i> 8. <i>Provincial governments are not given economic power, and</i> 9. <i>Decentralisation is not implemented practically at the local levels and public goods and services are mainly run by central government's field officers in all aspects.</i>
Source: (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006)

As already discussed in chapter 4 and further highlighted in Table 6.7, resource allocation is as much a problem in Vanuatu as in the Maldives. Most distant and remote islands are neglected, and, therefore, under-developed compared to provinces which are closer to the central government. A central government official commented that “communication and transportation in Torba²⁸ province is worse than the other provinces, that's the remoteness and isolation hindering the development in the province” (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). Another informant from the government mentioned the same issue: “the northern part of the country is left out because of the distance” (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). Furthermore, an informant pointed out the difference between provinces by suggesting that “Torba is disadvantaged because of the distance and remoteness” (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). In contrast, according to a senior official

²⁸ Torba is the northernmost province of Vanuatu, including the Banks Islands and the Torres Islands. It has a population of 7,870 people and an area of 882 km². Its capital is Sola from Creekin.net World Travel Information retrieved from (<http://creekin.net/c7246-n196-torba-vanuatu.html>), on 26 August 2006).

from Shefa (see Box 2.5) province, “we don’t have any problem to access the resources we needed from the central government because we are based in Port Vila²⁹, but this could not be the case for others, so decentralisation is not reached to others” (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). These comments show that distance does matter, even in a decentralised system, when it is implemented ineffectively (see chapter 5).

As discussed in chapter 5 earlier, the majority of the informants in Vanuatu agreed upon the institutional arrangements of the system for local governance but critiqued the effectiveness of the system. The informants suggested a number of possible policy changes in Vanuatu that could make the system more effective in addressing vulnerability issues. Table 6.8 presents the main suggestions of the informants extracted from the field data in Vanuatu.

Table 6.8: People's perceptions on required changes to make the system of Vanuatu more effective			
	Perceptions (Terms used based on understanding of informants)	Informants classifications	Common subject areas
1	<i>Do not invest in restructuring the system but invest in implementation of the already existing system and policies;</i>	Government/ non-govt Professionals, Graduates and moderately educated members of the community on Efate island, Tanna and Vila island	political commitment to implement existing system and policies
2	<i>Build up human resource capacity at the local level;</i>	Mainly government officials including some non-government professionals on Port Vila, Tanna and Vila island	building up human resources and communication
3	<i>Establish a strong communication mechanism between the officials from the two levels, central and local governments;</i>	Mainly government officials including some non-government professionals on Port Vila and Tanna	
4	<i>Delegate power to the local governments to manage their own affairs according to their development priorities;</i>	Government/ non-govt Professionals, Graduates and moderately educated members of the community on Efate island, Tanna and Vila island	delegating political and economic power to the locals
5	<i>Facilitate local governments with adequate funding to develop and provide public goods and services, and</i>	Government/ non-govt Professionals, Graduates and moderately educated members of the community on Efate island, Tanna and Vila island	
6	<i>Create more involvement of the chiefs, religious institutes and NGOs in policy making</i>	Government and non-govt Professionals, Graduates and moderately educated members of the community on Efate island, Tanna and Vila island including some tribal chiefs	strong partnerships with public, private and civil societies
Source: (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006)			

²⁹ Port Vila is situated on the south coast of the island of Efate in Shefa Province.

These suggestions are from 72 percent of the 58 informants from urban and rural areas. The 72 percent were mainly government officials at the central and local governments, teachers and some educated individuals both in urban and rural areas and chiefs. The remaining 28 percent of the informants, who were mainly individuals from rural communities, had no opinion about the themes to a large extent.

The abovementioned suggestions can be classified into four main themes, political commitment to implement existing system and policies, delegating political and economic power to the locals, building up human resources and communication, and strong partnerships with public, private and civil societies. Figure 6.2 shows the four areas of classifications of these themes and the percentages of informants who share these perceptions. The Figure will give an idea of what are the most pressing concerns among these informants.

The majority, 24 percent, of these informants suggested creating a strong partnership between public, private and civil societies so that the burden of addressing vulnerabilities and related problems would not be solely the government's role. Delegation of political and economic power to the locals has the second highest percentage, 21 percent. Informants felt that provincial governments can work effectively if the two, political and economic power, are delegated simultaneously. Decentralisation will be stagnated by the isolation of either power. In addition to

these, it was suggested that there should be a parallel political commitment to implement the institutional structures and policies in place, rather than investing enormous amounts of budget in restructuring and new policy design. According to these informants Vanuatu has an appropriate system in place and there are sound policies, hence such investment is not required. Although the pyramid of the informants who have raised concerns over human resources at the provincial governments and good communications between the two tiers of the governance is the smallest, still they are vital elements for an effective system as well as for efficiency. The informants indicated that the lack of communication between the two tiers has created confusion and misunderstanding about the central policies amongst the staff of provincial governments, hence the system remains stagnant.

The findings from Vanuatu reveal that the problem is not the concept of a decentralised provincial government system but some of the exogenous factors (see Table 6.7) for the system not adequately addressing the vulnerabilities of rural island communities. Therefore, those suggestions presented in Tables 6.6 and 6.8 are some very crucial areas that should be considered during and after the planning stage of any system if it is to be made effective, and efficient. These are lessons that archipelagic states, like the Maldives, should learn from if they are to establish a sound local governance system.

6.4 Vulnerability

The term ‘vulnerability’ is a dynamic and multi-dimensional concept, see chapters one and three. Vulnerability and its related terms, such as disaster, risk, environmental hazard and resilience, have been widely used in different contexts including socio-economic, political and environmental (Chambers, 2006, p. 33; Philip & Rayhan, 2004, p. 1; Ramachandran & Eastman, 1996, p. 2; Twigg & Bhatt, 1998, p. 6; World Bank, 2000/2001, p. 19). More than two dozen definitions for vulnerability are found in the literature because of its dynamic and diverse nature and the absence of a set definition (Birkmann, 2006). Nevertheless, the concept of ‘vulnerability’ is generally understood as the degree of harm, weakness and defencelessness due to its “common-sense meaning”, exposure to risk and

uncertainty (G. S. Bernard, 2007, p. 4; Wisner, et al., 2004, p. 11; World Bank, 2000/2001, p. 19).

Vulnerability is not merely the physical challenges of being geographically isolated and dispersed archipelagic communities, such as the Maldives and Vanuatu (Hewitt, 1983). It also describes the difficulties of creating effective systems and policies in place for the development of these communities. The definitions of vulnerability are not sought merely to add to the list – there are many more in the literature – but to help these countries to determine what to do to reduce the vulnerabilities of their dispersed and isolated island communities (Green & Penning-Rowsell, 2007, p. 29). It is important, therefore, to see the definitions of vulnerability from the viewpoint of the people. Findings from the fieldwork suggest that vulnerability is seen differently by these islanders based on what they have been facing as challenges, difficulties and constraints. The informants both in the Maldives and Vanuatu were asked about their perceptions on vulnerability and, to a large extent, their perceptions are found to be similar in both of the countries. I have listed here most commonly expressed perceptions extracted from the field data in the Maldives and Vanuatu. Vulnerability was described by these informants as the following:

1. Lack of accessibility to basic goods and services;
2. Lack of socio-economic opportunities;
3. Susceptibility to risks due to the surrounding ecological and geographical nature and the islandness;
4. Food insecurity and huge dependency on imported food and consumable goods;
5. Increasing drug abuse, and
6. Instability and uncertainty (Fieldwork, Maldives and Vanuatu, 2005 – 2006)

The meanings of vulnerability perceived by those who were interviewed in both countries reflect the situations in which the communities are living on these dispersed islands. At the same time these also correspond to the extent to which governance is associated with addressing the issues of vulnerability in these communities. Each of these meanings represents isolation from the system. In addition, these perceived meanings from the islanders correspond to the definitions

of vulnerability already presented in Box 3.2 in chapter three. These include the ecological and geographical situations, the physical, social, economic and environmental factors which are communities' means of coping with the impacts of vulnerability. The meanings also imply three elements of vulnerability, size and frequency of exogenous shocks or sensitivity, exposure to shocks, and capacity to cope with and recover from shocks (Bohle, et al., 1994, p. 39; Dow, 1992, pp. 420-421; Guillaumont, 2007, p. 2). For island communities in the Maldives and Vanuatu, 'lack' of accessibility to vital goods, services and socio-economic opportunities is not only connected to poverty but strongly related with vulnerability as well. The majority of these informants in both communities have identified these two 'lacks' as the most significant, see Figure 6.3.

However, some aspects, such as food security and increasing drug abuse, are mainly perceptions from the Maldives, where food insecurity was raised by almost 11 percent of the informants; see Figure 6.3³⁰. It has been identified that food security is not a problem in the areas of Vanuatu because the vast majority of the rural population there still rely on staple food crops grown through traditional 'gardening'.

³⁰ The Figure is not intended to present a comparative analysis as one to one in terms of numbers and percentage because there is variance between the numbers of informants of the two countries, 67 and 58, the Maldives and Vanuatu, respectively. However, the figure is aimed to show how people share these perceptions in both countries.

As discussed in chapters four and five, the differences in geological composition of the two countries contribute significantly to food security. Vanuatu can produce more agricultural products because its volcanic islands are more fertile than the coral islands of the Maldives. Drug abuse was not identified either as an issue in the rural areas of Vanuatu; this may be due to the presence of kava which may satisfy the need for such substance abuse.

There are two areas, susceptibility to risks and instability and uncertainty, in which people in Vanuatu are more concerned and aware than the people in the Maldives, due to the frequent occurrence of seasonal tropical cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. People in Vanuatu have also experienced political turmoil and civil unrest in the past recent decades since its independence, such as the civil unrest and street protests in 1998 due to the abuse of Vanuatu National Provident Fund (Jayaraman & Ward, 2006). The people of the Maldives experienced civil unrest once in the past recent decades when a few Maldivians tried to overthrow then the legitimate government using foreign mercenaries in 1988 (MPND, 2004a). Nevertheless, people in both countries are concerned about susceptibility to risks due to the ecological and geographical nature of their surroundings, economic instability and uncertainty, and external shocks.

As it can be seen from the Figure 6.3, the majority of the informants in both countries perceived vulnerability as ‘lack’ of accessibility to basic goods and services and socio-economic opportunities. Some of these informants went on to explain why they thought so. They mentioned that weather-related vulnerability, such as tropical cyclones, floods and wave surges, and natural hazard vulnerability, such as earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions, are not things that constantly occur, but are seasonal or periodical. According to them and as discussed in chapters 4 and 5, they constitute, therefore, temporary or ‘transient’ vulnerability, whereas ‘lack of accessibility to basic goods and services and socio-economic opportunities is more permanent or ‘chronic’ vulnerability. The informants felt that, if the ‘chronic’ vulnerability is addressed properly, then these communities would be empowered and better prepared to cope with the impact of ‘transient’ vulnerability. According to the informants and the researcher’s personal viewpoint, these issues cannot be

achieved without a sound system, effective policies and political commitment at all levels, both central and local, in the two archipelagos. The factors of chronic vulnerability are interconnected with the factors of poverty, which is discussed in the next section.

6.5 Poverty

It has been argued, as discussed in chapter three, that poverty and vulnerability are two distinct phenomena, not synonyms (Chambers, 2006, p. 1; Moser, 1998, p. 3; Philip & Rayhan, 2004, p. 1; Swift, 2006, p. 41; UNDP, 2002, p. 5). However, the undeniable fact is that “poor people are usually among the most vulnerable” (Swift, 2006, p. 41). Poor people are even more exposed to environmental risks, because of their lower coping capacity than the rich (UNEP, 2002b, p. 303). Due to this close causal relationship of poverty and vulnerability, often both phenomena are understood and used as ‘substitutes’ for one another.

The term poverty does not have a consensus definition either at international or national levels (Setboonsarng, 2005, p. 4). Therefore, just as there are disagreements and differences at all levels, international and national, about the definition of poverty and how to measure it, so too in the Maldives and Vanuatu.

The majority of informants from the Maldives’ government at national and local levels said that there is no poverty as such because no one lives here without food and shelter (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). Some of them added that you would not find beggars here except a few in Malé and the majority of these people have more than enough money, even more than an average income earner would have (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). These comments may be true but the reality is that there are people who cannot fulfill their family’s basic needs, nutritional requirements, health and educational requisites.

During fieldwork in the Maldives, the researcher met people who mentioned that their lives are generally managed with the help of relatives and well-wishers: some of them they give cash, regular food items, and even some of them buy educational

requirements for the children annually and some help in buying medicines (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). This mutual assistance as a kinship, religious and community obligation constitutes a means of survival for the island communities in the Maldives in day-to-day life, as well as times of hardship, and even during and after natural disasters. Interestingly, a few of the informants reported how they manage to purchase medicines and books for their children: we take book lists and prescriptions to our Majlis members [representative members in the parliament for that particular atoll] and they arrange it for us (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). Some of the informants interviewed in the atolls were recipients of the government's special assistance, a monthly allowance of Rf. 500 (about US \$ 38), which is reportedly given based on their socio-economic status. Some of these informants, mainly elderly or single parents, explained that, as well as the allowance, they were surviving with the help of well-wishers.

Here is a story of a Maldivian teenaged youth whom the researcher met on a boat while traveling in the atolls:

After completion of primary school I had to give up my education because my parents could not afford to send me somewhere else where I could attend a secondary school. I had an interest in education so I repeated the final grade thinking to stay longer in the school. Finally, I had to leave the school with no choice and thought to help my parents so, here I am, working as a boat crew member, so that at least my siblings can get educated (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006).

In fact, the researcher met several teens of the same age with similar stories. These young people and their stories reflect the flip-side of the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. How many of these youth who are of school age have left education without any option other than placing themselves at the mercy of the labour force to be blessed, exploited or abused? These stories suggest that people are not only suffering from poverty because of not having anything to eat or shelter to live in. The vast majority of these people are deprived through not being able to access basic services, mainly for two reasons. Firstly, services are provided inadequately or are not available at all. Secondly, people cannot afford to access services because of their low cash income. In both these countries some of the outer-islanders or rural population merely rely on subsistence fisheries or agriculture. According to Abbott and Pollard (Abbott & Pollard, 2004, p. 2), "poverty can be

either absolute or relative”. Based on the earlier discussions and general definitions of these two types of poverty, one can conclude that two forms of poverty exist to some extent both in the Maldives and Vanuatu. Poverty is not, therefore, only being unable to obtain a basic diet or shelter but also exists when people are unable to access basic services.

The majority of informants among the government officials in Vanuatu identified poverty mainly as ‘hardship’. Here is a comment from one of these informants:

there is no such thing as poverty in Vanuatu, everybody is rich with the nature, its just the way of life that people are living which may portray a picture of poverty here, you know, that is the usual island simplicity life and still people are happy (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006).

Some of these informants maintained that it’s not poverty but hardship [due to the lack of basic goods and services, and economic opportunities] that people are facing here in Vanuatu (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006).

Indeed, in the case of Vanuatu, as reported by the informants, even in the rural areas food is not a problem: people will manage as long as their ‘gardening’ continues growing traditional staple foods. A tribal chief from Tanna commented: “yes, people are vulnerable but no one will die from starvation. Every one will have food enough to eat or otherwise people will help” (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). Although people are able to fulfill nutritional requirements as revealed by the informants, still there are people who cannot meet health and educational expenses for their families. The researcher met numbers of people in the rural areas who cannot afford to send their children to schools or buy medicine. The vast majority of the rural population in Vanuatu rely on subsistence agricultural products and do not earn cash. As a result, they cannot afford services that require payments in cash, such as education, health and transport.

A government official and community activist from Tanna explained that “though the people here are happy with what they have but still the people want to see an improved life style with having access to, at least, basic services and economic

opportunities” (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). A woman from Tanna described her life:

myself and my family can eat and live because we have enough to eat from our gardening and we have a shelter to live but if we have to travel even within the island or if we have to go to hospital then it is really hard for us to manage because we don't have money for that. We make money sometimes by selling what we grow in our garden at the market but sometimes it is just not enough to buy things such as kerosene, and soap. We are managing to send our children to the school because the school accepts food crops from us, instead of money, when we can't contribute to the school in cash (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006).

Whether the above described situation of these communities in both archipelagos is called ‘poverty’ or ‘hardship’, the people have described very similar conditions, with similar causal factors of deprivation. Without dwelling on the form, whether it is absolute or relative, the definition of poverty rests with the people. Poverty is perceived by the informants both in the Maldives and Vanuatu as the following:

- 1) No shelter or food to live;
- 2) No money to fulfill basic needs, and
- 3) Without basic means of survival (Fieldwork, Maldives and Vanuatu, 2005-2006)

These definitions are very simple. Despite the simplicity, the meanings cover all impoverishing factors. These are the perceptions of members of the rural communities including some of the most disadvantaged people. The majority of these informants in Vanuatu perceived ‘poverty’ as not having food to eat or a shelter to live. The majority of the informants in the Maldives regarded poverty as not possessing a shelter, food or money. People with more awareness and education viewed poverty as a lack of basic means for survival, among which they include education, health and economic opportunities. Nevertheless, there are two things which make each of these communities better off than the other in different ways. Firstly, both communities have enough food to eat and shelters in which to live. However, where the rural communities of Vanuatu do not feel food insecurity because they still rely on self-grown traditional food crops, the people in the Maldives mainly depend on imported food and consumable goods, hence they have been experiencing food insecurity. Secondly, the rural communities in the Maldives

have more access to socio-economic services, especially education; therefore, they have a more improved life-style than the communities in Vanuatu. However, unlike the Maldivians, most of the Vanuatu communities are happy with what they have and can grow from their gardenings.

6.6 Development

As discussed earlier, development implies improvement and good changes in the socio-economic aspects of the people, community, and nation (Chambers, 2003; Seers, 1969), see chapter three. Development can be perceived differently by individuals depending on their culture, tradition, and faith. However, there would be hardly any society without a common desire for good changes to people's lives and livelihoods. Generally speaking, development is the process of empowering people in all aspects of their lives in order to bring socio-economic wellbeing to the entire society and the nation in the most effective manner so that every member of society can enjoy their lives (Cowen & Shenton, 1996; Todaro, 1985; UNDP, 2006).

Nevertheless, development is a subjective phenomenon. For some people, development is simply having access to basic socio-economic services and their infrastructures, whereas for others it may be more advanced utilities and services. findings from the fieldwork show that development is perceived differently even within the rural island communities, based on informants' awareness or educational background and type of the islands in terms of urban, semi-urban and rural. Even a person's career or profession of involvement within the community has great influence on their view and understanding of development. The informants both in the Maldives and Vanuatu were asked about their perceptions of development. Table 6.9 presents how they see it, grouped based on people's geographical location, career and level of involvement in the society.

Table 6.9: Perceived definitions of ‘development’ by field informants in the Maldives and Vanuatu grouped by types of people	
Perceptions	Categories of the informants
1. <i>Life improvement with happiness;</i> 2. <i>Accessibility to necessary socio-economic services on the island;</i>	General members of the rural communities on the islands
3. <i>Accessibility to improved socio-economic infrastructures;</i>	General members of semi-urban or urban island communities
4. <i>Self development in terms of knowledge and physical strength: so that every one of the community can survive within the system;</i> 5. <i>Wellbeing: improvement of life standard and self-reliance not only infrastructure development;</i> 6. <i>Self reliance and self dependency by all means;</i> 7. <i>Sustainability: of socio-economic services and their infrastructures in the rural areas which is critically challenging task for archipelagic states;</i> 8. <i>Empowerment: through education and knowledge, provision of socio-economic opportunities, endowment with ownership through participation;</i>	Members involved in NGOs and CBOs or work as government officials
9. <i>Education and awareness: development is not merely tangible physical objects but development should start from education and awareness, and</i> 10. <i>Positive changes in mind-set with education and awareness with more socio-economic opportunities</i>	More educated members of these communities
Source: (Fieldwork, Maldives and Vanuatu, 2005-2006)	

Each of the meanings given in Table 6.9 corresponds to the definitions given above and in chapter three, though each gives particular focus and stress on areas that are major concerns for the people. Development is, therefore, seen and understood depending on one’s concerns and priorities. As can be seen from the Table, for the many of these people development represents not merely being materially well off but also self improvement in terms of education and knowledge with socio-economic opportunities which will eventually bring happiness.

In contrast, development of a society or country is generally measured by economists and planners using two different indicators, growth in GDP, which purely concentrates on improvement of the country’s economy, and HDI, which measures improvements in social aspects, both at international and national levels. The two archipelagos, the Maldives and Vanuatu, have demonstrated some socio-economic

progress in terms of growth in GDP and HDI in the past years. As a result, the Maldives has qualified for the third round to be promoted from LDCs and, according to the UN General Assembly, it will graduate in January 2011 (UN, 2006). The country has been given a provisional period so that it can recover from the Asian tsunami impact. Vanuatu was found eligible for graduation from the LDCs for the first time in 2006³¹ (UN, 2006). According to the Review Committee of the LDCs situation, though Vanuatu had met the GNI per capita and HAI criteria, still it had a very high EVI score (UN, 2006).

In both of these archipelagos, more than 75 percent of the population live in rural areas, the vast majority on remote and fragmented islands. Despite the socio-economic progress in both countries, there remains wide disparity between the urban and rural communities in terms of socio-economic goods and services and their infrastructures. Field data from both of the countries showed that these rural islanders are more disadvantaged compared to urban communities because of lack of socio-economic opportunities. In the Maldives, the informants from all the field islands of Raa and Shaviyani atolls raised concerns over the very limited income generation avenues on the islands. For example, all the participants of a group discussion, comprising members from IDC, IWDC³² and NGO, in one of these island communities, agreed with the comment of one participant:

even if there were some avenues that we could generate income they are hampered because of the difficulty to access the island, for instance, we can catch tonnes of fish or we could buy fish from the neighbouring islands but there is no way that we could bring them to the island easily in time and fresh. We would not be able to unload and process the fish before they decompose (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006).

³¹ There were three major criteria for the identification of the LDCs in 2006: 1) Gross national income (GNI) per capita and the threshold for graduation was set at US \$ 900; 2) Human assets index (HAI) which includes a combination of four indicators, two for health and nutrition (the percentage of population under-nourished and the mortality rate for children aged five years and under) and two for education (the gross secondary school enrolment ratio and the adult literacy rate), and 3) Economic vulnerability index (EVI) which covers a combination of seven indicators: (a) population size; (b) remoteness; (c) merchandise export concentration; (d) share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in gross domestic product; (e) homelessness owing to natural disasters; (f) instability of agricultural production, and (g) instability of exports of goods and services (UN, 2006).

³² IDC is Island Development Committees and IWDC is Island Women Development Committees (see chapter 4).

There were similar comments from other island communities of Raa atoll. Two island communities in Shaviyani also expressed that they had experienced life threatening access difficulties, and livelihood activities were on hold for months each year until their harbours were dredged.

Numbers of people also mentioned that they often cannot access basic medicines because they are not available on the island or islands nearby. Almost all of the field islands in the Maldives reported annual shortages of drinking water during the dry season. In Vanuatu the situation in the island and village communities is even worse than in the Maldives, see Table 6.10:

Table 6.10: Access to improved water and sanitation, Maldives and Vanuatu, 2004		
Description	Maldives	Vanuatu
	(%)	(%)
Population with access to improved water sources	83	60
Population with access to improved sanitation	59	50
Source: Data from (UNDP, 2007)		

In Vanuatu, one tribal community reported that there is no water near the village and they have to fetch it from two kilometres away. A teacher from Tanna explained that there are insufficient teaching facilities to deliver quality education to the students; however, he further added: “there is no choice so we are happy” (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). Some of the professionals from the government and Emalus Campus of USP who were interviewed commented that the major problem in the development of Vanuatu is the lack of resources, unequal resource allocation and poor service delivery. One of them commented, “mostly locals are vulnerable because of the lack of resources and unequal distribution of the resource allocation” (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006).

As a matter of fact, there is increasing dependency by rural communities on central government and local or international donors, which is a challenge for development as a whole. A development activist from the Maldives pointed to this aspect, “dependency is more increased than ever before either on the government or donors,

which is a big problem for the development, maybe it is because of the centrally controlled democracy” (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). Dependency, therefore, could be reduced by empowering the rural communities through an interactive local governance approach among all stakeholders, especially giving emphasis to the involvement of civil society.

6.7 Civil society

In every society, whether small, large, developed or developing, there tends to be an influential cadre who works for the people and mediates between the governing bodies and their people. This influential cadre may be not known as a civil society in some places but it fulfils some of the contemporary definitions of civil society. As has been discussed in chapter three, civil society can be defined as people and entities that inhabit the space between people and the state as an influential group creating a link between the two (Hulme & Edwards, 1997; Martinussen, 1997). The term civil society, therefore, has a long history in societal politics in one form or another, as, in the past, with the Maldivian fishermen, *masverin* or *keyolhun*, and noble elites, *Bodun* or *Beyfulhun*, and the Vanuatu chiefs, *Iaramara* or *Ieni*³³. For a few people in these archipelagos, civil society constitutes groups with social status or wealth. For example, some of the informants from the Maldives commented that influential groups are civil society in the atoll and, so far, influential groups are those who have got wealth and own uninhabited islands (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). Some of the informants in Vanuatu felt that people or tribes who have more land rights and chiefly status are more influential in the rural communities (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). Table 6.11 outlines people’s perceptions of how civil society is constituted in rural areas.

³³ These terms are used on Tanna but probably not elsewhere in Vanuatu.

Table 6.11: People's perception on defining civil society in the rural areas	
Description of civil society in the rural areas, Maldives	Description of civil society in the rural areas, Vanuatu
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>NGOS and CBOs;</i> 2. <i>Fishermen, 'masverin' or Leading Fishermen 'keyolhun';</i> 3. <i>The noble elites, 'bodun' or 'kamuvoshigenvaa meehun';</i> 4. <i>People who are wealthy and own inhabited islands, and</i> 5. <i>The whole community</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Traditional chiefs their associations;</i> 2. <i>NGOs, CBOs and Unions;</i> 3. <i>Religious institutions;</i> 4. <i>Political Parties, and</i> 5. <i>Cooperatives</i>
(Fieldwork, Maldives and Vanuatu, 2005-2006)	

When civil society is seen from the point of view of the people whom the researcher met, talked with and interviewed in the islands of the Maldives and Vanuatu, there are two categories of people or entity that emerge. The first category is influential groups who can act as mediators between people and the state. The second category is volunteer groups or entities that take the welfare of the people and society into their hands and resolve problems with or without influencing the state. Interestingly, informants from the island communities in both countries commented that volunteers have tended to provide the most support. In addition, traditional tribal or village chiefs in Vanuatu are importantly recognised as belonging to both categories in today's context. The majority of rural communities in Vanuatu identified chiefs as the most influential groups who play a major role in resolving societal problems. In today's context, the Council for Chiefs also plays a significant lobbying role in Vanuatu. Nonetheless, according to the rural communities of the both countries, the volunteer groups or NGOs are the ones who genuinely work for the people.

In fact, the NGOs and CBOs working in these rural communities are the caretakers of the people's welfare, even though they may lobby the governments indirectly. However, in the case of Vanuatu, the umbrella NGO, VANGO, plays a lobbying role at the central level. According to some government officials, VANGO is powerful lobbying body and it has been very active to lobby the government to address emerging issues such as HIV/AIDS. It also provides health services and has its own awareness programmes on TV and radio (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). There is no comparable umbrella NGO in the Maldives, only one for youth NGOs, which cannot play a lobbying role because it is established under the auspices of the

Ministry of Youth and Sports. Furthermore, in Vanuatu, religious institutions, churches of different denominations, also carry out enormous welfare work, such as education, training, health, and awareness within the communities, and they also often act as mediators and lobbyists. In contrast, in the Maldives, religious institutions (mosques) are not involved in any activities other than religious ones, such as leading daily congregational prayers and running Quranic classes for the children (teaching how to recite the Quran) in some cases. Social services are generally provided by state institutions.

In the Maldives, NGOs and CBOs registered in the atolls have lobbying power at the island level but not at national level. The fishermen and noble elites are still influential because of their wealth and social status on the islands; some are even influential within the atolls. In fact, in practice these are the people who are wealthy and own uninhabited islands. The basis for the perception of the whole community as civil society is 'the community's role' in its own development, well-being and maintaining the goods and services. Unlike Vanuatu, currently, there are no cooperatives in the Maldives but since the past few years the Ministry of Atolls Development has been working to create cooperatives in the atolls. Reportedly, the Ministry has already formulated a cooperative law under one of its Outer Island Electrification Projects.

If the term 'civil society' is to be considered more broadly, it also includes different forms of unions, chambers and political parties which act as influential groups and lobbyists. Trade unions in Vanuatu have been established even during the colonial period, as well as political parties. In Vanuatu, civil servants and teachers' associations have been actively working for their rights even from the colonial era (Hince, 1996). Political parties were established in the country immediately after the independence in 1980 and some were even formed as pre-independence movements. In contrast, political parties in the Maldives were introduced only very recently, in June 2005 and since then the registered parties have been working for changes. It is hoped that the parties will have more political power to lobby the government after the very first election in 2008 in which all parties will contend for places in the parliamentary and presidential elections. Although trade unions are not banned by

law in the Maldives, they do not exist as such. However, there are organisations like the Maldives National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Maldives Association of Tourism Industry, and Maldives Association of Construction Industry. These organisations do not function as unions, although they do play a lobbying role to an extent for their own benefits.

A question in the field with interviewees was whether NGOs can play a greater role in reducing poverty and vulnerability of the rural communities. Mostly the responses in the Maldives were, NGOs cannot play any role to reduce vulnerability within the existing system because they are not involved in the process of governance (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). Further mentioned by some of the informants was that, there is a need for policies, laws and regulations that would create such an environment (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). In Vanuatu, most of the informants acknowledged that NGOs can play a great role to reduce vulnerability and are working towards this goal. An official from VANGO explained that “we work with the government departments and we sit with different committees but the problem only is we don’t get funding from the government” (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006). However, field findings show that there is room for more work to be done, even in Vanuatu, in order to empower the NGOs financially and technically, by providing funds and building human resource capacity.

The informants in both countries were asked whether they believed governments should be required to have partnerships with civil society and private sector to address vulnerability related issues. The majority of informants (three in every four) from both countries stressed the importance of people’s participation with these organisations. In other words, there is a need to create a participatory governance approach including all stakeholders of the state, government, private and civil societies, in order to address vulnerability-related issues and achieve socio-economic wellbeing throughout the country. The majority of the informants in the Maldives believed that the government alone cannot reduce vulnerability or create socio-economic opportunities. A group of members of an island community agreed that, the government in isolation cannot achieve this, therefore, all parties should involve

together even the government (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). Similarly, a development activist and government official suggested that, “there is a need for an NGO which can create partnership amongst all parties, the government alone cannot play that role, but rules and regulations also should be conducive to these” (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006).

In Vanuatu, almost all informants from the government, chiefs, NGOs, and educational and religious institutions and a few individuals from rural communities commented that stakeholders’ partnership is important. Especially vital, according to these informants, is partnership with the civil society that is already doing enormous work in the rural areas, because civil society can reach out to the rural communities more easily than any one else. An official from VANGO stated that

partnership is important, especially with chiefs, NGOs and religious institutions, the government should take these parties on board if it wants to achieve the development goal because they are the people who are attached to these communities one way or another. For this reason, VANGO has signed a contract, Memorandum of Understanding, with the government in 2002 for partnership and cooperation in development process (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006).

In the same manner, a senior government official highlighted the importance of partnership with NGOs in the development process:

NGOs in Vanuatu are doing very well in helping the rural communities. They support technically and financially to make water tanks as well as to run schools and Health posts. They would do much better than the government departments if they were provided with right resources because the government takes time to get the aid through to these people due to the prolonged procedural delay (Fieldwork, Vanuatu, September 2006).

The aforementioned anecdotal statements and people’s perceptions show that, despite the differences in nature and role of civil society in the Maldives and Vanuatu, its involvement is crucially important for the development of these fragmented communities. More significantly, sometimes the importance of a phenomenon for its people should not be denied but should be given the right and most appropriate place in the system, as in the case of Vanuatu’s traditional chiefs. The discussion also suggests that partnership with civil society is crucial for the very reason that governments alone cannot reach out to the rural communities and fulfil their needs because of the archipelagic nature of these states.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the research themes of governance, vulnerability, poverty, development and civil society. The discussions have been comparative in manner, mainly based on the field findings from the Maldives and Vanuatu, people's perceptions and the researcher's personal observations. Each of the research themes have been introduced briefly, linking to the literature and then bringing in some of the perceived meanings, real factors, and suggestions in order to address the problems.

According to people's perceptions in both countries, there are changes required in both systems. The Maldives needs to overhaul the entire system introducing new tiers together with delegation of authority, including fiscal power, so the system can be closer to the people. On the other hand, Vanuatu requires policy changes and capacity building at the local level accompanied by more central political willingness. The pragmatic evidence from the field informants suggests that the rural communities in both countries are vulnerable, with wide disparities in terms of development. These issues cannot be addressed by the government alone but with the partnership of all stakeholders of state governance, especially the civil society. People's perceptions described in this chapter and the previous two chapters, four and five, correspond with the theoretical and philosophical aspects of governance, vulnerability, poverty, development and the involvement of civil society already presented in chapter three.

Based on the two cases, the Maldives and Vanuatu, studied in this chapter and chapters 4 and 5 it can be said that, while the two countries share some similarities in terms of geographical nature, challenges and constraints, there are many differences as well. Each has unique features with comparative advantages of its own. If one country has improved and sustained one aspect of life, the other has developed another aspect of life. At the same time, the field data indicates that, regardless of its system, the Maldives has improved the living standard and

wellbeing of its people to a greater extent than Vanuatu. The major reason for this could be its high literacy rate and improved education system in rural areas.

Nonetheless, the two countries in general, and their outer-island populations in particular, are vulnerable to disasters because of the natural environments they inherit, as well as the diseconomies of scale and limited socio-economic opportunities because of the small size in terms of population and land. At the same time the vast majority of people in the two countries are disadvantaged because of the ineffective and inefficient systems of governance and policies, which are incapable of addressing their needs, basic services and socio-economic infrastructure. As a matter of fact, the discussions have showed that, when these factors converge and react together, the disparities widen, thus further increasing socio-economic and environmental vulnerability. Therefore, governance and vulnerability should be treated as closely interconnected phenomena and addressed concurrently, not in isolation.

Now, it is vitally important to see how these elements are dealt with in countries which are known for their effective systems and development. The next chapter, chapter seven, therefore, will be specific to New Zealand with some practical evidence from the Bay of Plenty region and its local governance system.

Chapter 7

Governance, Policy Models and Best Practice: Local Community Empowerment in New Zealand

7.1 Introduction

Chapters four, five and six discussed issues of governance, vulnerability and the related issues of poverty, socio-economic welfare, development and civil society, in the context of the Maldives and Vanuatu. In chapters four and five, these issues were investigated using secondary and primary data while the discussions in the sixth chapter drew mainly on primary data. It was shown that local affairs in the Maldives are planned centrally and administered by central government through its agents assigned at atoll and island levels. In Vanuatu, structurally there is an established provincial government system to manage local affairs but it is not effective because operational functions are still controlled by the central government. Although Vanuatu has, supposedly, a constitutionally decentralised local government system in design, in practice both Vanuatu and the Maldives have a ‘unitary’ system of governance with a policy of ‘deconcentration’ in place. The findings in these chapters strongly suggested that vulnerability and its related issues in archipelagic states like the Maldives and Vanuatu, where the vast majority of the population live on small scattered islands, could be more effectively addressed if local communities were empowered with a strong system of local governance. At this point in the argument, although there may not be a perfect system, free from problems, anywhere in the world, it is timely to examine a system of local governance that has been well established through years of trial and error, application and evolution.

New Zealand has a local government system, which has evolved through reforms and restructuring as part of a search for an appropriate system, since the British gained sovereignty in 1840 (Bush, 1997, p. 287; Cheyne, 2006; Mulgan, 1997; Ringer, 1991; Scott, et al., 2004). The current form of local government in New Zealand is the result of trialling various systems, boroughs, municipal corporations, town governments, and provinces over more than 150 years, including experiments with independent boards (Bush, 1997; Mulgan, 1997; Ringer, 1991; Scott, et al., 2004;

Wood, 1988). Throughout these reforms, the aim has always been to create an effective and viable system. Past debates have addressed a wide range of challenges and issues covering scope, size, and fragmentation. Moreover, in the late twentieth century the effectiveness of state governance in New Zealand came under immense internal and external challenges, related to increased pluralism and growing globalisation (Reid, 1999). As a result, in the 21st century a new system of local government emerged that was more autonomous – and integrated new liberal theories of economic and democratic governance which came into law – under the *Local Government Act 2002* (LGA 2002). To a great extent, the challenges and issues that have been faced in New Zealand were not unlike those facing archipelagic states like the Maldives and Vanuatu.

This chapter, therefore, is aimed at studying the local governance system of New Zealand in general, with some pragmatic evidence from people who are implementing the system in real life in the Bay of Plenty Region in particular. One of the main objectives of the chapter is to find out some possible answers to the question: What are ‘best practices’ of local governance in a developed country which could be applied as ‘remedies’ to reduce vulnerability in small archipelagic states?

The study of local governance in New Zealand is not intended to be a comparative investigation of cross national contexts of the three countries as a whole, involving all the themes discussed in the previous chapters, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the context of New Zealand as a whole does not lend itself to cross national comparison because of its advanced socio-economic development and resources. Secondly, it is large in size in terms of population and land. Thirdly, it has advanced human resource capacity and technology. Fourthly, unlike the Maldives and Vanuatu, the vast majority of its population live in urban or semi urban areas, 72.2 and 5.9 percent, respectively (Statistics New Zealand, 2008). Finally, New Zealand’s population is mainly fragmented on two large islands, not across numbers of dispersed islands as the case of archipelagic states like the Maldives and Vanuatu. However, the governance and the institutional arrangements of the three systems will be examined using a comparative approach in order to identify the gaps, as well as

possible policy models and ‘best practices’ from the systems of local governance in New Zealand.

7.2 The system of governance in New Zealand

New Zealand has a Westminster Parliamentary³⁴ form of governance with a monarch as nominal head of state (Cox & Miller, 2006, p. 131; Ladley, 1997, pp. 51-52; Ringer, 1991, p. 194). The Governor-General, who has limited power and is bound to follow the advice of the Ministers of the government, acts as the head of state on behalf of the Crown (Cox & Miller, 2006, p. 131; Ladley, 1997, p. 51; Ringer, 1991, p. 194). A Prime Minister, who is a member of the majority party or coalition in Parliament, is the head of the government of New Zealand (Hayward, 2006, p. 226; Ringer, 1991, p. 14).

The powers of the state are divided into three: the Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary (Ringer, 1991, p. 14). They work independently of each other (see Figure 7.1).

³⁴ New Zealand has a unicameral parliament rather than the bicameral parliament of the UK.

In New Zealand, all processes of governance, the administration and judicial and other important appointments, such as diplomatic assignments, are carried out in the Crown's name (Ladley, 1997, p. 51; Ringer, 1991, p. 14). The Prime Minister and members of cabinet are the Crown's ministers (Ladley, 1997, p. 51). Furthermore, the Crown's consent is necessary before any bill is enforced. These duties are conducted by the Governor-General as the representative of the Crown but with the advice of the Prime Minister and the Ministers of the Cabinet (Ringer, 1991, p. 14). The Governor-General of New Zealand has very similar symbolic roles to that of a President in countries like India, and Vanuatu. Both Governor-General and President can dissolve a government, if required. The major difference is that the Governor-General is appointed by the Crown, not elected.

7.3 Local governance, institutional structures and functional arrangements

New Zealand has a unitary system of governance with two levels of government, central and local (Cheyne, 2006, p. 286; Mulgan, 1997, p. 191; Scott, et al., 2004, p. 10). In unitary systems, unlike 'federations' such as United States, Canada, Australia and India, the parliament is the ultimate authority and the central government is legally sovereign (Bush, 1997, p. 118; Mulgan, 1997, p. 191). Local government in New Zealand is created by acts of Parliament or by law (Mulgan, 1997, p. 190; Ringer, 1991, p. 237; Scott, et al., 2004, p. 8). The powers, purpose and operational processes of the local authorities are determined by Parliament (Scott, et al., 2004, p. 8). Local authorities are, therefore, known as "creatures of statute" (Cheyne, 2006, p. 286) and are "subordinate to central government" (Mulgan, 1997, p. 190). However, the *Local Government Act 2002* (LGA 2002) provides local authorities with full capacity – in terms of rights, power and privileges – to perform their roles and to undertake any activity for the benefit of their regions or districts. The LGA 2002 has been under constant review since its introduction in order to address shortfalls and new emergences. Moreover, there are two parallel bodies, Local Government Commission, a statutory body, and Local Government New Zealand, a non-governmental society, engaged in promoting, advocating and improving the authorities at the national arena. According to key informants from the researcher's field visit to the Bay of Plenty Region, the local authorities are accountable directly

to their respective local communities. The local authorities are self-reliant in terms of generating revenues and development funding, as will be discussed in 7.3.4.

7.3.1 Purpose of the local government

The *LGA 2002* clearly communicates the idea that creation of a local government system is essential for promotion of local democracy, empowerment of the local communities and their wellbeing. The purpose of the local government system is stated in *Section 10*:

- a) “to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and
- b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future” (*Local Government Act, 2002*).

According to Cheyne (2006, p. 287), “this new purpose can be described as the ‘sustainable development purpose’ highlighting as it does the need for an integrated and long-term perspective when promoting community well-being”. The set purpose also corresponds to the key considerations suggested by informants in the Maldives and Vanuatu as a way of addressing the vulnerability issues of fragmented communities in both countries. For example, there were suggestions for bringing governance closer to the communities and facilitating participation in decision-making for their socio-economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing. There was also the desire for integrated and long-term visions in tackling socio-economic and environmental vulnerability of these communities.

7.3.2 Divisions of the local government

The crucial and challenging task has always been to establish an appropriate local government system. Local government in New Zealand consists of regional councils and territorial authorities (*Local Government Act, 2002*). Currently, there are 12 regional councils and 73 territorial authorities, 16 city councils and 57 district councils (Local Government New Zealand, 2008b). The 57 district councils include the Chatham Islands and four unitary councils, Gisborne, Marlborough, Nelson, and Tasman, which carry out both regional and territorial functions together (Cheyne, 2006, p. 287; Local Government New Zealand, 2008b). Unitary authorities are

created specially to address the issues of resource management in geographically large places with a small population (Cheyne, 2006, p. 287). As a general rule, every part of New Zealand within a territorial authority should come under a Regional Council, otherwise the Ministry of Internal Affairs is the territorial authority. These examples of unitary authorities demonstrate that similar arrangements could work for archipelagic states based on specific situations, even within a uniform system. Special arrangements could be made for very isolated or smaller provinces or atolls, for example in the case of Ganviyani atoll or Vaavu atoll of the Maldives and Torba Province in Vanuatu.

Although the governance system in New Zealand is generally regarded as having two levels, central and local governments, the local government system is divided into a number of levels. Mulgan (1997, p. 194) identifies three levels of local government, according to size: regional, district/city, and community. According to him, the boundaries of these tiers of local government have been decided after an exhaustive local consultation based on the common interests of local communities (Mulgan, 1997, pp. 194-195). In a fairly similar manner, Bush (1997, p. 118) groups all local bodies into four categories: regional; territorial; community; and *ad hoc*.

Cheyne (2006, p. 287) identifies community boards as a sub-local tier of local government for the territorial authorities (district and city councils). Territorial authorities are identified by Mulgan and Bush as the most important levels of local government in terms of service delivery (Bush, 1997, p. 118; Mulgan, 1997, p. 195). Community boards are known as the sub-local advisory bodies or primary links to the local communities, which advocate and promote local interests and citizens' participation in the decision-making process (Bush, 1997, p. 118; Cheyne, 2006, p. 288). Although, according to the LGA 2002, a Community Board must be established in each community constituted within territorial authorities, Community Boards only existed in some 37 percent of the territorial authorities by June 2008 (Local Government New Zealand, 2008a). As of June 2008, there are 143 Community Boards and 46 of the 73 territorial authorities have one or more Community Boards, Southland District and Auckland City Councils have the highest

numbers, with 12 and 10 Boards, respectively (Local Government New Zealand, 2008a).

The Board members are either elected under the *Local Electoral Act 2001* (LEA 2001) or appointed by the territorial authority in which the community is situated in accordance with the LEA 2001. The Community Board is neither a local authority nor a committee of the relevant territorial authority, but is identified as an unincorporated body with power delegated by its respective territorial authority. Nonetheless, Community Boards do not have the power to acquire or dispose of property nor to appoint or remove staff. The roles of the Boards are stated in section 52 of *LGA 2002* as the following:

- a) “represent, and act as an advocate for, the interests of its community; and
- b) consider and report on all matters referred to it by the territorial authority, or any matter of interest or concern to the community board; and
- c) maintain an overview of services provided by the territorial authority within the community; and
- d) prepare an annual submission to the territorial authority for expenditure within the community; and
- e) communicate with community organisations and special interest groups within the community; and
- f) undertake any other responsibilities that are delegated to it by the territorial authority” (*Local Government Act, 2002*).

The Community Boards of New Zealand are somewhat similar to the Island Development Committees (IDPs) of the Maldives in terms of their functions, responsibilities, elections and designations. The IDPs exist in all island communities. However, their roles in the local affairs are not defined constitutionally or by statute. Theoretically, there may be similar boards or committees appointed in Vanuatu but there was no evidence of these in operation during the field research. As discussed earlier, in Chapter four, the Energy Unit (EU) of Vanuatu’s Ministry of Lands, Geology, Mines, Energy, Environment and Water Resources has tried to establish Rural Development Committees in the rural communities but so far they have not been effective (GEF and UNDP, 2004). However, the Local Councils in Vanuatu, reportedly, operate through a committee system (CLGF, 2008). In order to enhance

local empowerment, such boards or committees could also be created in archipelagic states and given statutory privileges similar to the Community Boards in the New Zealand model of local government.

7.3.3 Divisions of the functions of the local government

As revealed by the field visit to the Bay of Plenty region, and literature and website surveys, the local authorities in New Zealand are autonomous in their governance processes. Institutional and functional boundaries of the authorities are clearly defined in LGA 2002. The local government system in New Zealand is significantly different from most other systems elsewhere, such as England, Canada and Scandinavia (Mckinlay Douglas Limited, 2006). It also has been noted that local government structure and range of functions in New Zealand are relatively simple compared to other jurisdictions, and the scope of services limited (Mckinlay Douglas Limited, 2006; Reid, 1999). Nevertheless, Reid (1999) maintains that the local government in New Zealand has high autonomy compared to many European countries. The autonomy has been enhanced with more democratic values under the LGA 2002.

According to the LGA 2002 (*Local Government Act*, 2002), a governing body, elected in accordance with the *Local Electoral Act 2001*, is responsible and accountable for the decision-making of the local authority. A chairperson of a regional council, elected by members of the regional council, or a mayor of a territorial council, elected in accordance with the Local Electoral Act 2001, is a Justice of the Peace in his/her respective council during the term that s/he holds office. However, Bush (1997, p. 121) points out that ultimate power is vested in councillors, and the chairperson or mayor “has only one vote and there is no guarantee of being able to call the policy tune”. The governing bodies, therefore, function as the regulatory and decision-making authorities at the local levels. The executive body lies under a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) appointed by the local authorities.

The local authorities only appoint CEOs for executive bodies, who, in turn appoint and are legally in charge of all other staff (Bush, 1997, p. 121). The CEOs have overall responsibility to implement the decisions and effectively manage the activities of the local authority. This fashion of local management is structured adopting the principles of the new public management, “let the managers manage” (Bush, 1997, p. 121; Mulgan, 1997, p. 194). Nonetheless, the CEOs are ultimately accountable to the governing body of their respective authorities.

The functions performed by the two main tiers of New Zealand local government are separately defined and boundaries demarcated, though some of these functions are shared with other levels of government, central and regional (Mulgan, 1997). For example, roading is the responsibility of both territorial authorities and central government, and civil defence is a function of all levels of government (Mulgan, 1997). Bush (1997, p. 118) suggests that regional council functions are tightly defined, whereas territorial authorities have functions which are “legislatively required”, such as the preparation and maintenance of planning and civil defence, and “optional”, such as basic services including roading and water supply. The major functions of regional councils are defined as natural resource management; protection of environment; regional land transport planning; harbour administration; and civil defence (Cheyne, 2006; Local Government New Zealand, 2008b; Mulgan, 1997). The range of functions in which regional councils are involved suggests that they act as an overall regulatory body for environmental protection and delivery of services at the regional level, such as transport, harbour administration and civil defence.

The key functions of territorial authorities, district and city councils, cover community well-being and development; environmental health and safety including building control and civil defence; infrastructure, such as roads, sewerage, water supply and storm water management; recreation and cultural activities; and resource management including land use planning and development control (Cheyne, 2006; Local Government New Zealand, 2008b; Mulgan, 1997). For example, Opotiki District Council in the Bay of Plenty Region identifies the following as its functions, responsibilities and activities:

- “Facilitating solutions to local needs;
- Advocacy on behalf the local community with central government, other local authorities and other agencies;
- Development of local resources;
- Management of local infrastructure including network infrastructure (e.g. roads, sewage disposal, water and storm water, and community infrastructure (libraries, parks and recreational facilities and harbour development);
- Environmental management, and
- Planning for the future needs of Opotiki District” (Opotiki District Council, 2005, p. 2).

This shows that the territorial authorities are directly involved with the local communities in terms of promoting their socio-economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing.

7.3.4 Revenues and funding at the local levels

Local authorities, regional, district and city councils, in New Zealand are legally allowed to generate their revenues independently from national government, though there are some limitations and regulations in their financial dealings. For example, raising income or consumption taxes or borrowing to fund ordinary activities are not permitted (Bush, 1997; Cheyne, 2006; Mulgan, 1997). Local authorities, both regional, and city and district councils, generate revenue through various means, such as rates, user charges, fees and fines, government grants and subsidies, commercial activities, and interests and dividends (Bush, 1997; Cheyne, 2006; DescionMaker, 2004; Mulgan, 1997; Ringer, 1991; Scott, et al., 2004). Of these, a large proportion of their revenue comes from rates or property tax, about 50 to 60 percent (Cheyne, 2006, p. 288; Scott, et al., 2004, p. 13). Funding from central government to local authorities is limited to direct programme grants, such as for land transport and roading, which represent about 10 to 12 percent of the revenue of local authorities in general (Cheyne, 2006, p. 288; Scott, et al., 2004, p. 13). The local authorities are allowed to engage in commercial activities and raise loans for major capital developments (Mulgan, 1997, p. 196). The Environment Bay of Plenty (Regional Council) estimated its operating revenue for 2007/2008 as NZ \$ 51,897,500, which is generated from five different sources, investment income, user

fees and charges, targeted rates, general rates and other public funding (Environment B.O.P, 2007/2008). Figure 7.2 presents how this revenue is derived.

According to the LGA 2002 (*Local Government Act, 2002*), local authorities must conduct business activities in an open and democratically transparent and accountable manner while considering the wellbeing of local communities as their first and foremost priority. The Bay of Plenty region conducts its business activities through a Council Controlled Organisation, Quayside Holdings Limited, as provided in Section 55 of LGA 2002. The Bay of Plenty region's economic facts will be brought into the discussion as needed in 7.4.

The limited fixed grants and small proportion of funding from the national government show the level of local authorities' financial self-reliance and freedom in managing their affairs (Cheyne, 2006, p. 288; Scott, et al., 2004, p. 13). The local authorities are free to impose their own regulations, rates and user charges based on their own determinations (Mulgan, 1997, p. 196; Scott, et al., 2004, p. 14). The authorities can make local regulations using "by-laws" (Mulgan, 1997, p. 196). The authorities are entitled to go beyond statutorily-defined functions in order to provide communities with services and meet their demands. This has been characterised as one of the important features of the local government's legislative framework in New Zealand (Scott, et al., 2004, p. 12). However, local authorities must also prepare

annual budgets through a meaningful citizen participatory process (Bush, 1997, p. 120). Moreover, the local bodies are not free from the process of financial scrutiny by the Controller and the Auditor-General, as well as investigation by the Ombudsman (Mulgan, 1997, p. 197; Scott, et al., 2004, p. 14). The process of scrutiny and investigation applies in the same manner for both central and local authorities.

7.3.5 Governance and operational principles

Governance and operational principles and requirements for local government authorities are identified in the LGA 2002. According to the section 39 of the LGA 2002, every local authority must perform its governance process in accordance with the following principles:

- a) “a local authority should ensure that the role of democratic governance of the community, and the expected conduct of elected members, is clear and understood by elected members and the community; and
- b) a local authority should ensure that the governance structures and processes are effective, open, and transparent; and
- c) a local authority should ensure that, so far as is practicable, responsibility and processes for decision-making in relation to regulatory responsibilities is separated from responsibility and processes for decision-making for non-regulatory responsibilities; and
- d) a local authority should be good employer; and
- e) a local authority should ensure that the relationship between elected members and management of the local authority is effective and understood” (*Local Government Act*, 2002).

The LGA 2002 outlines mandatory aspects of compliance that every local authority must undertake in accordance with these governance principles. For example, firstly, local authorities must prepare and update, whenever required, their local governance statements and make them available for the public. These include their functions, responsibilities, activities of the local authority, and local legislation, regulations and bylaws that confer certain powers on the local authority. Secondly, local government authorities must establish their governing bodies and conform with governance principles. Thirdly, local authorities must appoint Chief Executives who are

responsible for the management of the local authorities. Fourthly, local authorities must establish a Community Board for each community within their constituencies.

7.3.6 Independent bodies involved in promoting and enhancing local interests

At the central level there is a corporate body, the Local Government Commission, which has statutory power conferred by LGA 2002 or any other enactment (*Local Government Act*, 2002). The Commission, appointed by the Minister of Local Government, consists of three members including the chairperson. The Commission determines and recommends matters relating to the organisation of local authorities, especially issues referred by the Minister or any other party (*Local Government Act*, 2002; Local Government New Zealand, 2007). The Commission is particularly required to:

- “Consider and process proposals for constituting new districts, the unions of districts or regions, and for city or district councils to assume regional functions;
- Investigate and rule on objections from any party concerning draft reorganisation schemes proposed by councils;
- Review regional, city and district council decisions at the triennial review of membership and constituency or ward boundaries;
- Oversee the establishment or disestablishment of community boards
- Investigate and report on matters referred to it by the minister relating to local government, and
- Determine applications for the extension of loan rating areas” (Local Government New Zealand, 2007, pp. 85-86).

Local authorities must comply with recommendations and decisions of the Commission but an appeal can be filed against its decision in the High Court (*Local Government Act*, 2002; Local Government New Zealand, 2007).

In New Zealand, like most ‘developed’ countries, local government is empowered by the great involvement of non-governmental associations and organisations, as a national voice in promoting and advocating local government and community related

matters. The New Zealand Local Government Association, known as the Local Government New Zealand, plays a major role by promoting the national interests of local authorities and their communities (*Constitution of the Local Government New Zealand*, 2001/2005). According to the rules identified in its Constitution, Local Government New Zealand is not only a lobbying body but is also involved in carrying out research and conducting training programmes for local authorities to improve their systems.

There are other non-governmental corporate organisations involved in promoting and advocating interests and concerns of local authorities, such as the Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM), which is a professional membership organisation that promotes best practice, the Association of Local Government Information (ALGIM), which promotes and shares Information Technology as a tool for greater effectiveness and efficiency, and the Association of Local Government Engineering New Zealand Incorporated (INGENIUM) which involves improving the quality of engineering in local authorities (Local Government New Zealand, 2007). These organisations uphold the specific areas in which they are specialised, however, Local Government New Zealand plays an overall role, linking and bringing together these organisations to promote and advocate the interests of all local authorities.

There are no such independent organisations, either governmental or non-governmental, working for the promotion of local interests in the Maldives and Vanuatu. In the Maldives, the closest organisation is the Ministry of Atolls Development, which controls the overall administration of the atolls. Generally, the Vanuatu Department of Local Authorities within the Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for administering the *Decentralisation and Local Government Regions Act* at the central level in Vanuatu (CLGF, 2008). However, reportedly, a local Authorities Association of Vanuatu is in the process of establishment (CLGF, 2008). Such development, however, will clearly require much in the way of human resources, governance skills, and capacity building.

7.4 Some ‘policy models’ and ‘practices’ from the New Zealand model of local government system

This section highlights and discusses some of the ‘policy models’ and ‘practices’ that may help to address some of the vulnerability related issues in archipelagic states, like the Maldives and Vanuatu. It will discuss only the issues most relevant to the purpose of this study as revealed during the researcher’s investigation of New Zealand model of local governance system. The discussion brings some pragmatic examples from the Bay of Plenty Region. Therefore, this section will begin by providing a brief socio-economic profile of the region.

7.4.1 Brief socio-economic and environmental profile of the Bay of Plenty region

The Bay of Plenty (BoP) is on the east coast of the North Island covering some 21,836 square kilometres including 12,253 square kilometres of land and 9,583 square kilometres of coastal marine area (see Box 2.7 and see Figure 7.3 for Bay of Plenty map) (Environment B.O.P, 2008). According to the 2006 Census, the region’s population was 257,379 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). Of these, 67,662 are Māori, 12.0 percent of New Zealand’s total Māori population (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). More than 67 percent of people in the Bay of Plenty Region are ethnically Europeans, some 27.5 percent of people are Māori, and others include people from Pacific, Asia, Latin America, Africa and Middle Eastern backgrounds (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). Table 7.1 presents some key socio-economic facts for the Bay of Plenty and New Zealand.

The key economic industries of the BoP are tourism and agriculture-based, including horticulture, dairy farming, plantation forestry and wood processing (BERL, 2007; Environment B.O.P, 2001). The region is popular for kiwifruit, providing over 80 percent of New Zealand’s kiwifruit production (BERL, 2007; Environment B.O.P, 2001). In 2006, the region employed some 125,000 “full-time equivalents” and generated NZ \$10.45 billion in GDP involving 36,500 business units and contributing 6.7 percent of national GDP (BERL, 2007, p. 3).

Table 7.1: Key socio-economic facts for the Bay of Plenty region and New Zealand

Key facts	BoP	NZ
The median income ³⁵ for people aged 15 years and over	NZ \$22,600	NZ \$24,400
Annual income of NZ \$20,000 or less	45.4 %	43.2 %
Annual income of NZ \$50,000 or more	15.3 %	18 %
People aged 15 years and over with a post-school qualification	38 %	39.9 %
People aged 15 years and over with no formal qualifications	29 %	25 %
The unemployment rate for people aged 15 years and over	6.1 %	5.1 %
The average household size	2.6 people	2.7 people
Households with access to the Internet	56.4 %	60.5 %
Households with access to a cell phone	73.7 %	74.2 %
Secondary schools	40	476
Student enrolment	50,736	760,761
Student Teacher ratio for all levels	16.9	17.2
People aged 15 years and over with a post-school qualification	38 %	39.9 %
People aged 15 years and over with no formal qualifications	29 %	25 %
Medical Practitioners (General Practitioners, House Officers, Medical Officers of Special Scale, Primary Care, Registrar, Specialists)	500	8,725
Source: (BERL, 2007; Statistics New Zealand, 2006)		

³⁵ Median income is defined here as half earn more, and half less, than this amount (Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

The Port of Tauranga is the main hub of the region's economy and counts as New Zealand's largest in terms of throughput of kiwi-fruit, dairy and forestry-related exports (BERL, 2007; Environment B.O.P, 2001). The Port is managed by the Port of Tauranga Limited, which is part of the region's Council Controlled Organisation, Quayside Holdings Limited. Beside Tauranga harbour, wharfs in the region include Whakatane, Ohope and Opotiki. In terms of air traffic, Tauranga, Rotorua and Taupo Airports and Whakatane, Tokoroa, Rangitaiki and Opotiki Aerodromes in the region provide air transportation in the region (BERL, 2007).

7.4.2 Local empowerment: An enhanced local government system with delegated authorities

The discussions on local governance in New Zealand show that the strength of local authorities lies in their statutorily-created autonomous power and clearly articulated boundaries and limitations. These institutional and functional obligations are well defined in LGA 2002 and communicated among the local bodies. An official from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council commented that “because of the too many layers and tiers of the governments there might be confusion within the community but not within the council; they are well defined and communicated” (Fieldwork, BoP, November 2006). Moreover, the system is enhanced by separating the regulatory and decision-making bodies from the executive or management, even at the local levels, as shown in Figure 7.1. The LGA 2002 defines the boundaries of governing and executive bodies of the local authorities, see Sections 41 and 42 (*Local Government Act*, 2002). The LGA 2002 promotes the New Public Management style in local administration and, according to the key informants from the BoP region, has created more competence and efficiency in the implementation of the plans and policies.

At the same time, independent government and non-governmental bodies are working simultaneously to uphold both national and local interests within the statutory boundaries, see Figure 7.3. Therefore, local governments in New Zealand are empowered by the delegation of administrative and financial power in the course of service delivery and investments. One of the key informants from Opotiki District Council commented that:

it's good to have Local Government Act 2002, and according to the Act, local governments can do anything for the development and wellbeing of their people. The Act clearly identifies the four well-beings of the communities [social, economic, environmental and cultural] on which local authorities should focus in their development planning. Opotiki District has its own long term community plan, 2006-2016 conforming to the Act (Fieldwork, BoP, November 2006).

The field comments also suggest that the closeness of the system of governance to the people makes the members of the community more empowered because of the easy accessibility and outreaching. One of the key informants from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council stated that:

I believe that there is a strong co-relation between governance and vulnerability, any form of vulnerability can be reduced through good governance at all levels. Governance should come closer to the people to outreach so that would have great impact on all aspects (Fieldwork, BoP, November 2006).

Another official from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council responded that “if there are only regional councils and no districts then the connectivity will be lost, the outreach will not be there as it should be, so it is very important to have strong lower level government bodies” (Fieldwork, BoP, November 2006). In fact, according to the field information, district councils tend to be more focused on micro economic policies, whereas regional councils focus on the broader level. District Councils form policies or plans based on their situation and conditions but in conformity with the regional and national level policies and plans.

Field data from the Maldives and Vanuatu, as discussed in the previous chapters, showed that the systems in these two countries lack some of these fundamental aspects. See Table 7.2.

<u>Table 7.2: A comparative analysis of local governance in the Maldives, Vanuatu and New Zealand</u>			
	Local governance	Types	Governing/Executive body
Maldives	Centralised system	Traditional atolls and island offices Governed by centrally appointed staff (Deconcentrated)	Governing body is the central government Executive bodies are appointed centrally

Vanuatu	Constitutionally decentralised local government system	Provincial Centrally controlled (Deconcentrated)	Governing body is elected The head of Executive body, the Secretary General, is appointed centrally as a member of public service
New Zealand	Statutorily decentralised system	Regional/district/city councils Autonomous	Governing body is elected Executive body is appointed by the local Governing body
Source: Fieldwork, Maldives, Vanuatu and BoP, 2005-2006 and based on the understandings from literature survey			

Table 7.2 illustrates that the Maldives has a centralised system with centrally appointed staff at the atoll and island levels. The atoll and island level staff have no authority to make policy level decisions. Both Vanuatu and New Zealand have decentralised systems but only New Zealand has delegated power with all privileges, both in design and practice. Although Vanuatu has a constitutionally decentralised system, the local authorities are centrally controlled; hence, the system is no closer to the people in practice. Most importantly, local authorities in New Zealand are financially self-reliant to a great extent, though field data suggested that funding is still one of the key problems at the regional and city or district levels.

This pragmatic and practical evidence from three countries suggests that a governance system can be brought closer to the people when the system is empowered by delegating authority, and the boundaries and limitations of all arms of state governance are clearly defined constitutionally or statutorily. In this way, local authorities can address community problems in accordance with local needs and knowledge, without interference and intervention. Delegation of authority would also allow local bodies to identify constraints in terms of human resources and economic viability and build up these areas. However, this would require local authorities to be financially empowered and self-reliant, to a great extent.

7.4.3 Financial empowerment: Revenue sharing and economic cooperation

The strength of any local government and its capacity is mainly based on the given fiscal arrangements in its design: “local bodies can do very little without funds” (Bush, 1997, p. 119). Generally speaking, this has been the major weakness of most of the local governments in developing countries like Vanuatu, even though it has a

very similar system to New Zealand, structurally and functionally. Even countries where local affairs are administered through locally-based central agencies or extensions, for example the Maldives, have similar experience. Local plans, such as Rural Economic Development Initiatives (REDI) in Vanuatu and Island Development Plans (IDP) in the Maldives remain ineffective blueprints. Financial resources are, therefore, vitally important in order for local authorities to effectively perform their functions. As Cheyne (2006, p. 288) points out in her discussions on funding of the local government in New Zealand, “the capacity of local government to perform certain functions may be determined by the level of its financial resources”. There should be a financial mechanism run independently by local government authorities to a great extent, in order to operate effectively.

This is one of the vitally important aspects required to empower local authorities as well as local communities. Without an established funding mechanism and financial empowerment, local governments can do very little. In the same vein, local communities cannot do any better without more socio-economic opportunities being created. The former New Zealand Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Helen Clark, in her opening address for the Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2007, Auckland, expounded that financial self-sufficiency is one of the characteristics demonstrated in the New Zealand model of the local government system (H. Clark, 2007).

In the New Zealand model of local government system, the LGA 2002 allows local authorities to undertake all possible socio-economic activities, including investments, in order to promote the wellbeing of the members of the communities. The Act also allows two or more local authorities to engage in joint or co-operative activities, in terms of economic development and service delivery. According to the informants from the Bay of Plenty Region, the concept of “*Pair Company*” or “*working together with neighbours*” has been advocated for the economic development, infrastructure development and service delivery, in order to limit diseconomies of scale and increase the scope. For example, ports and airports in the region are developed under this concept through a revenue-sharing mechanism. Development of Ohiwa Harbour involves three Councils, Opotiki and Whakatane District Councils,

and Environment Bay of Plenty, the Regional Council (Environment Bay of Plenty, 2008). The Port of Tauranga is operated by Quayside Holdings Limited, a commercial company, Council-controlled and owned by the regional council, Environment Bay of Plenty. The region also operates public buses to address transport needs. Currently, the region is also going through a process of undertaking and establishing a regional infrastructure development fund, which may be in effect by 2009 (Hey, 2007).

Similarly, the Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Tauranga City Council's joint Smart Growth project is an example of "*working together with neighbours*". This 50-year project is intended to address the fast-growing population and its demand in terms of land use planning, infrastructure development and service delivery. A memorandum of understanding between the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group and the Hawke's Bay Civil Defence Emergency Management Group is another example of working together with neighbours. The agreement between the two regions is to carry out collaborative activities and help each other during any emergency event.

Even though there are still human resources to be considered, such concepts and 'best practices' could be used by archipelagic states, like the Maldives and Vanuatu, where communities are fragmented and small in size, creating current diseconomies of scale and limiting economic development opportunities. However, such concepts would only be effective if local communities are empowered through education and awareness action programmes and the creation of more enhanced local democracy.

7.4.4 Local community empowerment: Citizen participation in planning and decision-making process

The general procedures of decision-making, consultation processes and planning strategies are also detailed in LGA 2002, which makes local democracy, community participation and sustainable development values compulsory. Community outcomes are well regarded in the course of any actions undertaken by the local authorities.

The process of decision-making is outlined in the LGA 2002 in a way that involves citizens' participation, especially the most vulnerable people affected by the decision. For example Māori input has been emphasised separately in LGA 2002. The elements required to include in the process of decision-making show the extent that democratic values are integrated into the New Zealand local government system, see Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4: Decision-making process for the New Zealand local authorities outlined in LGA 2002

Source: produced based on the understandings from the LGA 2002 (*Local Government Act, 2002*).

Local authorities in New Zealand are also asked to undergo the same procedures in their long and short term planning. Such processes are aimed to create a strong local democracy and promote a sustainable community development as stated in the objectives of the local government. In addition, an inclusive, informed and participatory decision-making and planning process will empower the local communities, especially when the boundaries and linkages are “creatures of statute”

and citizens’ rights are preserved through overseeing and monitoring of independently functioning bodies as institutionalised in New Zealand, see Figure 7.5.

According to key informants from Opotiki District Council and the Regional Council of the Bay of Plenty, the processes of decision-making and planning are not just confined to the average ratepayer or resident, but also involve civil society and other key stakeholders, such as NGOs, cooperatives and private sector parties. An informant from Opotiki District stated that “we carried out consultation on numbers of phases with the community for the next 10 years planning and they are mainly conducted through workshops and postings” (Fieldwork, BoP, November 2006). The informant further added that these stakeholders are generally involved during the decision-making and planning processes but not in implementation. An official from

Environment Bay of Plenty responded that “at the policy level we work with the civil society, especially during the planning stage” (Fieldwork, BoP, November 2006).

Similar consultative approaches are conducted in the Maldives and Vanuatu to some extent at the local level, especially in the planning processes of the IDP³⁶ of the Maldives and the REDI³⁷ of Vanuatu. However, such processes are not “creatures of statute” in either of these countries; therefore, they are not constant and mandatory. Once the processes are over, most often citizens are not informed and reports are not publicly available. Moreover, no statutorily independent body is involved in the check and balance and reporting procedures.

7.4.5 Promotion of socio-economic and environmental well-being: mandating in all policy decisions

Governments and their stakeholders cannot address socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities unless they are incorporated into an inclusive and cohesive approach together with policy measures. This cohesiveness is the key characteristic and strength of the contemporary New Zealand model of local government under LGA 2002. The LGA 2002 has set promotion of social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing as one of the key objectives of the New Zealand local government (*Local Government Act*, 2002). Opotiki District Council of the Bay of Plenty states its own purpose as “to enable democratic local decision-making to promote the social, economic environmental and cultural well-being of the district in the present and for the future”, which clearly reflects to the LGA 2002 (Opotiki District Council, 2005, p. 2).

Local government authorities are mandated to fulfil the objectives of the local government. Therefore, policy decisions and plans should be in line with improving the socio-economy of the communities while protecting and promoting their environmental and cultural well-being in a sustainable manner. By highlighting the promotion of four elements of community well-being, social, economic,

³⁶ Island Development Plans (see section 4.6.1)

³⁷ Rural Economic Development Initiatives (see section 5.6.1)

environmental and cultural, the New Zealand model of local government demonstrates an inclusive approach in addressing socio-economic and environmental issues coherently and concurrently.

An inclusive and cohesive approach, covering socio-economic and environmental aspects, is especially crucial for countries which are vulnerable in terms of their geographical and ecological nature, like the Maldives and Vanuatu. At the same time, a sustainable development approach in promoting these areas could be enhanced through a strong and sound emergency management system.

7.4.6 Civil defence emergency management: Decentralising to the local authorities

The New Zealand model of Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) is a decentralised and comprehensive system under which regional, city and district councils are delegated with authority to act upon any hazardous event. The statutory powers, structural relationships and arrangements at the national and local levels are identified in the *Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002* (CDEM Act 2002). The Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (MCDEM) is the central body which has the overall responsibility of CDEM in New Zealand. The MCDEM formulates the National CDEM Strategy and Plan and oversees the CDEM.

Local government is an essential component in the New Zealand model of CDEM. Although local authorities generally run under the terms of the LGA 2002, the emergency management at the local level is co-ordinated and operated through local authorities, establishing CDEM Groups at the regional or unitary council levels. CDEM Groups are formed from local authorities, district and city councils. It is mandatory for all local authorities to be registered as members. The CDEM Groups prepare the regional CDEM plans and co-ordinate with territorial authorities in their CDEM planning and activities.

Under the CDEM Act 2002, a state of emergency declaration can be made by the Chairpersons at the regional level or Mayors at the district and city councils or a

designated person on behalf of these representatives. The Minister of the MCDEM has the power to declare a state of emergency at the national level, over the whole of New Zealand or in particular areas or districts. However, the Minister can only make such a declaration if the situation is beyond the scope of the local authorities affected or likely to be affected.

As defined in the CDEM Act 2002, centrally-controlled lifeline utilities and resources, such as Television and Radio New Zealand, transport and telecommunication networks, New Zealand Railways, and gas and electricity providers are integrated horizontally through a deregulated environment (Bay of Plenty Emergency Management, 2005). As a result, lifeline utilities must provide technical advice to any CDEM Group or the Director of CDEM at the national level free of charge when required. According to the Guide to the National CDEM Plan 2006 (*The Guide to the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan* 2006), 'New Zealand's overall capacity and capability is made up of combined national and local resources'. The relationship between national and local authorities and other organisations is illustrated in Figure 7.6.

Figure 7.6: Relationship between the core CDEM agencies, government departments, and government and non-government organizations in New Zealand

Source: from (*The Guide to the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan* 2006)

The strategy of the New Zealand model of CDEM is not only designed and planned to address a hazardous event when it occurs but also adopts a sustainable approach, focusing on core areas of emergency management, reduction, readiness, response and recovery: the “4 Rs approach”. This approach to hazards management aligns with New Zealand’s sustainable development strategy for social, economic, cultural, and environmental well-being of the communities as a whole. This is identified as one of the key purposes of the CDEM Act 2002.

According to the CDEM 2002, the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Strategy provides the overall strategic direction for CDEM, which identifies ‘the need to reduce hazards and risks, and how to be ready for, respond to and recover from emergencies’. As mentioned earlier, this aims to be achieved through integration of national and local CDEM planning and activities with the alignment of National CDEM strategy. The CDEM 2002 provides the basis for this integration of the national and local levels as well as the co-ordination among all the parties involved in CDEM.

Emergency management is important in any country regardless of its geography and ecology, but a greater focus is required when the country is especially vulnerable to hazardous events. Archipelagic states like the Maldives and Vanuatu are exposed to constant threats and risks of hazards such as cyclones, wave surges, earthquakes and tsunamis. However, the fieldwork findings revealed that both the Maldives and Vanuatu lack a strong system of emergency management. Any systems are mainly based in central government with very limited resources compared to the magnitude of the threat each of these countries is exposed to, as well as the size and topography of the island communities. Mainly, the resources and disaster management centres are based on the central level in the Maldives and Vanuatu, see Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: A comparative analysis of the disaster management systems in the Maldives, Vanuatu and New Zealand			
	Maldives	Vanuatu	New Zealand
Type of Approach to Disaster Management	Central approach	Central approach	An integrated decentralised approach
Location of resources	Mainly Centrally based	Mainly central based	Both central and local levels
Planning for disaster management	Centrally planned	Centrally planned	Planned at central, regional and territorial levels
Resource: Produced based on the understandings from literature survey and field finding			

In contrast to the largely centralised approach in the Maldives and Vanuatu, in the New Zealand model of a disaster management system, local authorities act upon such events independently. At each level, there is a plan addressing core areas of disaster management, reduction, preparedness, response and recovery. For example, in the Bay of Plenty, there is a long term plan focusing on the entire region prepared in the consultation with all its district and city councils, as well as individual plans for each district and Tauranga City. In these plans the councils identify where citizens should assemble in case of any hazardous events and from where they can reasonably expect to get assistance. In addition, each council has its own website³⁸ which covers important information about the hazards likely to occur in the region and links to the Ministry Civil defence and Emergency Management's website³⁹. The most important aspect in these plans is the major focus given to public education and awareness programmes.

According to the field data, the majority of the island communities in the Maldives and Vanuatu are not prepared to respond properly in an event of an emergency, such as fire, in either country. In case of natural or weather-related disasters, the lack of preparedness of these communities is beyond imagination. Now the striking question is, what about centrally-based resources and utilities? According to some of the most

³⁸ See <http://www.cdwestbay.govt.nz/>, <http://www.wbopdc.govt.nz/>, <http://www.tauranga.govt.nz/>, <http://www.whakatane.govt.nz/Services/>, <http://www.kaweraudc.govt.nz/>, <http://www.rdc.govt.nz/>, <http://www.odc.govt.nz/Pages/default.aspx>, <http://www.taupodc.govt.nz/>.

³⁹ See <http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/memwebsite.nsf>.

affected communities from the Asian tsunami in the Maldives, it took central government two to three days to deliver basic relief assistance. This suggests that it is crucially important for countries like the Maldives and Vanuatu to have an integrated system similar to the New Zealand model based on their own geographical nature, which could effectively and efficiently address vulnerability and disaster-related issues.

7.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to identify policy models and best practices that might be of use to address the socio-economic and environmental problems in small archipelagic states, like the Maldives and Vanuatu. This chapter, therefore, has briefly discussed how the local, regional and state governance of New Zealand is structured, institutionalised and works. Then it considered issues of the local government system, highlighting the structure and institutional arrangements including power, purpose, function, and funding mechanism. The discussion is supported by input from local body officials in the Bay of Plenty Region. Finally, some of the policy models and best practices from the New Zealand system are highlighted giving examples from the Bay of Plenty. These policy models and practices, in particular delegation of authority to the local authorities, revenue sharing and economic cooperation, community empowerment through citizen participation in planning and decision-making process, promotion of socio-economic, environmental and cultural well-being, and decentralisation of civil defence emergency, may also be useful to enhance systems elsewhere.

In conclusion, the New Zealand model of an integrated and decentralised approach to disaster management might not work in archipelagic states unless there is a strong and empowered local governance system, with local authorities being delegated certain level of powers constitutionally or statutorily. At the same time, locals need to be financially empowered so they no longer depend heavily on the central government, which could be a great challenge. Such improved changes in the system would help local authorities address the problems existing in archipelagic communities, such as improving educational level, building skills and creating more socio-economic opportunities, which would eventually help to retain skilled people

on the atolls and islands. The next chapter will present some possible models as a way forward, based on the discussions conducted in this and previous chapters.

Chapter 8

Governance Matters: Vulnerability Reduction in Fragmented Island Communities

Governance is a system which provides people with all means of their well-being and opportunities to benefit from and enjoy its resources and facilities (An extract from fieldwork, Maldives and Vanuatu, 2005-2006).

8.1 Introduction

In general, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are socio-economically and environmentally vulnerable due to their geographical and ecological conditions. Communities in small archipelagic states are even more vulnerable, in particular because of the unique characteristics of their living environment in terms of fragmentation, isolation, and smallness. However, the literature survey and field data (chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5) revealed the gap and extent to which increased socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities of archipelagic states among SIDS are not solely due to geographical and ecological aspects but are also associated with governance. The thesis, therefore, argued (chapters 1, 2, and 3) that ‘vulnerability’ and the related problems of fragmented communities in archipelagic states, like the Maldives and Vanuatu, must be addressed together as different aspects of the development challenge rather than separately. In this thesis, it has been argued that both ‘governance’ and ‘vulnerability’ should be treated as interrelated phenomena. Comprehensive and appropriate governance is also an equally important precondition for poverty reduction.

Chapters 1 and 3 have further argued that socio-economic and environmental vulnerability can be addressed by increasing resilience and capacity to cope with and recover from ‘natural’ disasters. This can be built by empowering socio-economically marginalised and geographically dispersed communities by increasing ‘capabilities’ in terms of education, health, and other necessities. Sen (1979, p. 218) conceptualises basic capabilities as:

a person being able to do certain basic things. The ability to move about is the relevant one here, but one can consider others, e.g., the ability to meet one’s nutritional requirements, the wherewithal to be clothed and sheltered, the power to participate in the social life of the community.

Capability and empowerment come, as Alsop et al (2006, p. 1) suggest, through “the process of enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes”. If marginalised and fragmented communities are empowered through such a process, then their capabilities will be expanded, enabling them to “participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives” (World Bank, 2002a, p. vi). Therefore, the development approaches, ‘empowerment’, ‘capability’ and ‘participation’, have been advocated by the study because the conceptual framework of these approaches communicates and aligns with fundamental elements of governance, accountability, participation, predictability and transparency. A lack of fundamental elements of governance within the system means the absence of basic frameworks for these development approaches and vice versa.

The research carried out involved multiple case studies using a qualitative approach (chapter 2) supplemented with secondary quantitative data. Three different systems, the Maldives (chapters 4 and 6), Vanuatu (chapters 5 and 6), and New Zealand in general and the Bay of Plenty Region in particular (chapter 7), were studied in order to understand the phenomena in different contexts and to uncover some exemplars of practices and policy models. The study sought to understand the phenomena through people’s perceptions and their experiences; therefore, five major methods (secondary data collection, informal semi-structured interviews, open-ended discussions, informal conversational interviews and direct observations) were used in the field.

The study of the Maldives and Vanuatu (chapters 4, 5 and 6) revealed that rural island or village communities in both countries are socio-economically and environmentally vulnerable due to the features of their living environment and inadequate socio-economic opportunities. The study also revealed that the socio-economic and environmental wellbeing of these fragmented communities, and governance as a whole, are centrally controlled in both countries, even though Vanuatu has a constitutionally decentralised system of governance with six provincial governments. The Maldives has centralised governance both structurally and functionally.

The findings from the field data and literature survey of both countries show that the Maldives and Vanuatu have achieved certain socio-economic international goals and met criteria in terms of socio-economic development. Despite this, by and large both the Maldives and Vanuatu have not yet succeeded in addressing the socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities of their fragmented communities on dispersed islands, and the disparities between rural and urban areas are increasing. As a result, according to the people's perceptions (chapter 6) there is a need and demand to bring government closer to the people. In a nutshell, there is an increasing desire for local democracy and empowerment in a way that will ensure that local voices can be heard both at central and local levels.

However, the researcher's personal observations indicate that the Maldives has done more to promote and improve its people's socio-economic and environmental wellbeing compared to Vanuatu. The assessment is not only based on statistical evidence (such as economic growth, life expectancy, school enrolment and literacy rates) but also my field observations and experiences in both countries. The basis of this assessment (see chapters 4, 5, and 6) lies in the availability of an adequate socio-economic infrastructure and services for rural areas (outer-islands and villages) and accessibility to these services and facilities. However, such improvement is not because the centralised system of the Maldives is more effective and appropriate than the decentralised system of Vanuatu. It is rather because of contributions by the communities themselves – initiatives which are in fact diminishing slowly because of the changes in socio-political behaviour – in providing infrastructure and services. There have been similar practices in Vanuatu as well but community involvement has been the policy practice and tradition of the government of the Maldives over the past decades. As mentioned earlier, one may also argue that this is because the Maldives has been a strong state, which has enabled it to exercise more power compared to Vanuatu.

However, it has been a common practice and tradition of the Maldives' island communities to contribute to developing and maintaining island level services and facilities both financially and in-kind (see chapter 4). Most often, labour costs are contributed by the communities. Construction of island health and education

facilities is such an example. Electricity on eighty percent of the islands is provided by community-run power houses (see chapter 4), while safe drinking water is also mainly provided and maintained by the community on the majority of the islands. The higher literacy and awareness among island communities of the Maldives compared to Vanuatu seemed to be another of the key drivers for this development. Nevertheless, the Maldives' government could do even better if the system were more effective.

Such community initiatives and participation in their development can be maintained and enhanced if they are backed up by a strong and effective local governance system which can undertake development initiatives with these communities. The local authorities should be initiators, facilitators and implementers of development for the wellbeing of the community, and collaborators between all levels of government and stakeholders, rather than just administrators or implementers for the central agencies' plans. These community initiatives could happen if there were sound local government systems, although at present there is still a centrally-controlled system in the Maldives and Vanuatu. Alternative development scenarios in centrally-controlled and local government settings can be illustrated as in Figure 8.1.

The first part of Figure 8.1 illustrates a scenario of development management in the current centrally-controlled system and the second part of the diagram describes the scenario if a strong and effective local government setting were established, as in the New Zealand model of local government. In the first, centrally-controlled scenario, the gap widens between the communities and government policies, whereas it is expected that the gap would lessen in the second scenario, where the community members themselves also participate in policy making and planning. This has been shown in the case study of the New Zealand local government model (see chapter 7).

The study of the New Zealand local government model (chapter 7) found that local voices can be heard, that it is mandatory for local councils to encourage citizen participation and consult local people in the decision-making process. The socio-economic, environmental and cultural well-being of locals can effectively be addressed when the formal system of governance is set up in a manner under which both functional and fiscal powers are delegated to local authorities. The study of the New Zealand system showed that emergency management works better if it is decentralised to local authorities, providing access to essential resources at different levels, district, and city, regional and national, through a cluster approach. The New Zealand model of governance and emergency management places a great deal of emphasis on extending human resource empowerment to people at local levels and providing back up by community education and awareness raising about environmental hazards.

These multiple case studies demonstrate that governance needs to address people's socio-economic and environmental vulnerability, especially those of fragmented, isolated and small communities. As the study has revealed, a rigid centralised system, like the Maldives, is not very appropriate for small archipelagic states. Nor can a decentralised system, as in Vanuatu, be effective unless certain functions are delegated and the local authorities made self-reliant, financially and functionally self-sufficient, and aware of their responsibilities through education.

In summary, this thesis has identified four major problematic areas, which may also be called major constraints, in addressing the socio-economic and environmental

vulnerability issues in small archipelagic states in general, and in the Maldives and Vanuatu in particular. These areas can be sketched out as follows:

- 1) Absence of a reliable outreach mechanism for emergency management in the event of a socio-economic and environmental disaster;
- 2) Lack of a strong local governance system with centrally based independent bodies able to promote local democracy and uphold local interests and voices, and oversee local authorities;
- 3) Scarcity of resources and smallness of population as well as land in most cases, which has an adverse impact on the socio-economy of the island communities, such as lack of opportunities in terms of viability and feasibility of investment in infrastructure, limited avenues for diversification of the economy, and diseconomies of scale, and
- 4) Inadequate infrastructure which in turn could limit the socio-economic empowerment of the geographically fragmented island communities.

Now the question is what is the best way of both addressing these issues and overcoming these problems?

8.2 The way forward: Application of the findings and progression of new models

These four issues will be addressed based on findings from the literature survey (chapter 3) and the Maldives and Vanuatu fieldwork (chapters 4, 5, and 6), while trying to apply the development approaches advocated in the study (chapter 1) and some of the policy models and practices from the local government of New Zealand model (chapter 7). In this way, the section will propose models in order to address some of these problems of emergency management and local governance in the Maldives, based on the lessons learnt from the case studies, Vanuatu and New Zealand. This section will also present suggestions to empower the island communities of the Maldives in order to reduce socio-economic vulnerability.

8.2.1 Establishment of a viable system for emergency management

As discussed in chapters 4 and 5, the Maldives and Vanuatu lack a viable outreach emergency management system. Mainly the existing disaster management centres are located in central government in both countries. Empirical evidence has shown that a centralised system is not very effective for archipelagos, like the Maldives, for example when the government could not deliver assistance to some of the island communities within the critical first two to three days following the Asian tsunami of 2004. Although this study's fieldwork did not reveal specific examples from Vanuatu that relate to this issue, it would likely experience similar problems during natural disasters. This thesis, therefore, proposes that archipelagic states, and the Maldives in particular, establish a decentralised system similar to the New Zealand model of Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM), under which local authorities would be delegated with the authority to operate an emergency management system (see chapter 7). In the New Zealand model of CDEM, all levels of government, national, regional, district or city councils, have their own CDEM plans and each has an appropriately resourced CDEM body. All lifeline utilities and resources, such as television, radio, transport and telecommunication networks, and electricity providers are integrated within the system of CDEM and they must provide technical support on demand as required by the authorities. The local emergency management is run by CDEM groups, all of which are members of local authorities.

The proposed model of emergency management for the Maldives would create Disaster Management Centres (DMCs) at the regional level, Disaster Management Units (DMUs) in the atolls and Disaster Management Sections (DMSs) at the island level. Each of these levels would have short and long term plans for disaster management. The DMUs and DMSs would be crucially important because they could draw on the natural and practical communal set up of the Maldives. Island communities should be equipped at least for the most likely hazards such as fire and floods. In an event of fire, for example, islanders cannot wait for fire fighters to come from atoll units or regional centres, which may take hours. Nevertheless, the regional level would also be crucial to include in such a system because there are vital regional infrastructure and service facilities depots already in place. This level is also

important because specialised and expensive resources can at least be located in the regions. Figure 8.2 outlines the proposed system and the relationship between the core disaster management agencies.

As can be seen from Figure 8.2, disaster management should be co-ordinated among these outreach bodies and the National Centre for Disaster Management at the central level, in terms of training, community awareness and education and building the capacity of utilities. As illustrated in the Figure, this cluster approach and coordination would build up the overall capacity of the country, resulting in more effective and efficient management. In the long-term, the system would enable a reduction in some of the emergency transport costs that might otherwise be required – in a centrally based system – to deploy resources from the central base to the ‘disaster’ area. At the same time, it could also increase employment opportunities in the islands, atolls and regions. It is worthwhile noting here that international

organisations have also moved towards a cluster approach, since 2005, in terms of coordinating resources and technical expertise in emergency management (Street, ActionAid, & Parihar, 2007, March)⁴⁰.

Any adopted strategy for disaster or emergency management should be sustainable, focusing on reducing socio-economic and environmental vulnerability, and prepared to respond to and recover from any disastrous event, as in the New Zealand model of Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM). The strategy of the New Zealand model of CDEM adopts a sustainable approach, targeting the core areas of emergency management, reduction, readiness, response and recovery.

The following recommendations would be necessary in order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed emergency management system for the Maldives:

- Institutionalise by statutory Act, clearly outlining the mandates of each authority;
- Establish a strong emergency transport and communication network within the system, such as providing a speed boat and satellite phone to each atoll or region;
- Create community awareness and develop education programmes;
- Recruit and train staff in disaster management, and
- Equip the DMSs, DMUs, DMCs and NCDM with the right tools and resources.

In parallel, it would also be important to increase resilience within the island, atoll and regional communities, government authorities and NGOs by promoting the mutual assistance and obligations already existing in the traditional, community and religious contexts, and consolidating them in terms of disaster management

⁴⁰ See also Humanitarian reform website at <http://www.humanitarianreform.org>.

(Campbell, 1998). The system would also require “[mainstreaming] the disaster risk management and adaptation to climate variability and change in a mutually supportive manner”, as integral components of the national development planning (macro and micro levels) process (Hay, et al., 2004, p. 40).

However, this thesis argues that the proposed Disaster Management System (DMS) would only work if it is backed up by a sound local government system. Without an integrated governance approach, the DMS would remain ineffective because of local dependency on central control in terms of decision-making and resource mobilisation. Moreover, for a sustainable approach to vulnerability reduction, readiness, response and recovery cannot be achieved in archipelagos without the empowerment of their island communities. Therefore, what follows is a possible model for local governance in the Maldives in order to make the proposed DMS effective.

8.2.2 Establishing a strong local government system

According to the field data, the majority of informants from the government officials and individual islanders in the Maldives (63 out of the 67 interviewees) commented that the governance system is neither appropriate nor effectively institutionalised for a country with such geography, in order to best address the vulnerability of its fragmented communities (chapter 6). The main reason for the system not being effective and appropriate was identified as the fact that everything, including socio-economic services and activities, is centrally controlled (see Box 1.5). Moreover, the field research highlighted that the well-being of the small and disadvantaged communities is often neglected, because the government focuses on the larger islands for politically-motivated reasons.

There are a number of suggestions and desired changes highlighted by the Maldivian informants that might enable the system to address vulnerability issues and empower the locals (chapter 4 and 6). The majority of the people who had an opinion suggested that a country like the Maldives would require a decentralised system and the second largest group considered very explicitly that a local governance system

would be the way forward. Mainly, the desired goal would be to bring the government closer to the people in an effective and efficient manner.

Since the whole idea perceived by the people of the Maldives is to establish a decentralised local government system, it might be important to learn lessons from the Vanuatu system (chapters 5 and 6). Vanuatu has a constitutionally decentralised local government system in design, even though in practice it has been less than effective. Political functions supposedly divested under a policy of decentralisation are still controlled by the central government. Services and utilities are mainly run and maintained by central government.

Accordingly, in Vanuatu, 42 out of the 58 participants agreed that the governance system is structured and institutionalised appropriately to reduce vulnerability, but is not practised effectively (chapter 6). The factors they identified as the main hindrances included poorly implemented decentralisation due to control of public goods and services at the provincial level remaining in the hands of central government, confusion and miscommunication over the roles and responsibilities between different tiers of the government, and lack of human resources (see Table 6.7).

The majority of Ni-Vanuatu informants who had an opinion on the effectiveness of the system thought that provincial governments would work better if political and economic power were delegated, because effective decentralisation was being hindered by the isolation of one from the other (chapter 6, see Figure 6.2). The second largest group of informants stressed the need for a strong partnership between public, private and civil society, recognising that government alone cannot carry the whole burden of addressing vulnerability and related problems. Similar to the informants from the Maldives, those in Vanuatu called for political commitment in terms of implementing the existing system and policies, building up the human resource capacity at the provincial level, better communication between the central and provincial governments, and strong partnerships between public, private and civil societies. These suggestions support all of the governance models, especially

the triangular and reciprocal relationship of functions (chapter 3, see Figures, 2, 3 and 4.3).

The strength of the New Zealand model of local government system is its inclusion of the issues discussed above (chapter 7). The foundation of the New Zealand model was laid to facilitate ‘democratic local decision-making’ in the process of promoting the socio-economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of its communities in a sustainable manner, both in the present and for the future (*Local Government Act*, 2002). As discussed earlier (chapter 7), the New Zealand model of local government is enhanced by statutorily-defined boundaries in the LGA 2002 in terms of the rights, power and privileges of local authorities to perform their roles and responsibilities. They are well communicated to ensure no confusion among local authorities. The following four aspects from the New Zealand model of local government are the most important to ‘take away’ as policy models and best practices:

- 1) Enhancing local authorities by statutorily delegating power to the local authorities with clearly defined boundaries and limitations to manage local affairs;
- 2) Empowering local authorities financially by allowing them to statutorily engage in economic activities in order to generate their own revenues;
- 3) Empowering local communities by statutorily mandating local authorities to encourage and involve citizen participation in all planning and decision-making processes, and
- 4) Promoting sustainable community wellbeing by mandating local authorities to consider the socio-economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of their communities as a first and utmost priority in all policy decisions.

Generally speaking, these are the key elements to which one should give a great amount of consideration in engineering a system for local governance or remodelling the existing system. This thesis will, therefore, assign great importance to these aspects in its proposed model for a local government system in the Maldives, which might also work in other archipelagic states with necessary modifications based on the context of each respective country.

8.2.2.1 Tiers of governments in proposed local government model

The proposed model mainly suggests two tiers of governance, central and local, but with possible sub-tiers for the local government system. The traditional two extensions of central government, atolls and islands, are inevitable and necessary due to the geography of the Maldives and should be retained as sub-tiers for the local system. Otherwise, the geographical connectivity or link would become even more distant, which would undermine the objective of bringing the system closer to the people. As already recommended in a study carried out in 2005 by a joint Maldives' government and UNDP mission on *Strengthening Decentralised Governance in the Maldives* (2005, p. 13), "based on practice and the perceived reality of the island being the natural unit of communal life in the Maldives, to establish Local Councils at the island level". Certainly, this will result in some diseconomies of scale, but alternatives and other possible options, such as enhancing the ongoing Population Consolidation Development and Growth Centres Programmes in the Maldives, could address this problem, by adopting more sound policies with genuine political commitment. These policy programmes could also be implemented more effectively if they were integrated within a strong local governance system. The proposed local governance model for the Maldives takes into account the existing socio-economic infrastructures and utilities, especially the initiatives and establishments of health and educational systems, at the island, atoll, and regional levels (see chapter 4). It also includes the previously proposed emergency management system, in which the four levels, island, atoll, regional and national, would be involved in a decentralised cluster approach (see Figure 8.2).

The local government system is, therefore, proposed as having three sub-tiers. The first two are the atoll and island councils, while the third sub-tier could have two possible options, either to establish Regional Councils or Regional Development Boards. Setting up Regional Councils would be in line with the government of the Maldives' current plan to replace Island and Atoll Development Committees with Councils (MoAD, 2007). Although the draft law of the Island and Atoll Councils does not include a Regional Council (MoAD, 2007), its establishment was recommended for the second phase of reform in the government and UNDP mission's report (2005) on *Strengthening Decentralised Governance in the Maldives*.

Moreover, it is also important to consider the current infrastructure in the atolls and the government's ongoing major policy and programmes to address socio-economic disparity between urban and rural island communities, especially between Malé and the atolls. Service delivery is already established at the regional levels. The government has also set up regional offices for development planning and management, under which growth centres are established (see chapter 4 and Figure 4.1). This means a regional level authority must also be considered at some stage, sooner or later, to cater for the existing infrastructure and ongoing policy programmes. The model proposed by this thesis seeks to retain the fundamentals of the government's proposed local government structure and existing establishments while giving more focus to aspects of community involvement in governance. The proposed tiers of local authorities can be outlined as follows:

- 1) ***Island Councils:*** would be the lowest sub-tiers of the proposed local government system. They are the most direct and important level involved in the socio-economic, environmental and cultural conditions of the island communities because they are the closest authority to the people. Island Councils should work to promote the well-being of their respective island communities. The authorities must conform with atoll level, regional and national plans and policies. The more effective and efficient the Island Councils, the more development and empowerment they will bring to the people. Councillors should be residents of respective islands. The numbers of councillors at the island level could be based on population size, similar to the proportional arrangement in the current IDCs (Joint Government and UNDP Mission, 2005). The councillors should be elected by the communities through popular vote based on the size of the population. The Head of the Island Councils could be elected either directly by the people, or from amongst the elected councillors. Alternatively, the Head could be the elected councillor who gets the most votes.
- 2) ***Atoll Councils:*** these would be the second sub-tiers of the proposed system. Atoll councils are the second most direct authorities to the people. It is suggested that Atoll Councillors to be elected from amongst Island Councillors through a conventional vote. This may help to make the system

less expensive, initially, then, once they are well-established and financially more viable, then Atoll Councillors could be elected independently from the Island Councillors. However, it could be argued that directly-elected councillors might be more accountable than indirect ones (Joint Government and UNDP Mission, 2005) There should be at least one representative from each island community within the constituency of the atoll. The heads of the councils, both Island and Atoll Councils, could be named Island or Atoll Chiefs or Chairpersons, based on the outcomes of consultations with communities. As the joint Maldives government and UNDP mission's intention is to introduce an entirely new system, they have recommended completely abolishing the title of '*Chief*' at both island and atoll levels (Joint Government and UNDP Mission, 2005). However, from the researcher's point of view, this is unnecessary, because the bottom-line issue is the setup and system, not the name. A modern system can be adopted while still retaining traditional aspects and names.

- 3) ***Regional Councils/Regional Development Boards:*** these would be the third proposed and most distant authorities from the people, other than central government. Regional authorities, regardless of their name or type, should comprise at least two atolls based on strategic geographical location. Factors like distance, geographical fragmentation, population, size in terms of numbers of islands, and accessibility should be considered in the formation of regions. Allocation of regional boundaries should be made in consultation with the locals. The existing five regional divisions in the Maldives could be considered, for example, which would allow utilisation of the existing socio-economic infrastructure and services established at the regional level. However, people currently have concerns about the viability of the existing divisions, due to a number of factors, such as imbalance of geographical boundaries, as well as distance and geographical isolation within the atolls. For example, informants in two atolls, Gaafu Alifu and Gaafu Dhaalu, in the most southern region expressed concerns over the viability of the region because of distance and accessibility. Such issues could be resolved through local consultation, as suggested by Mulgan (1997, pp. 194-195). For example,

in the case of New Zealand, the boundaries of local government authorities were decided only after exhaustive local consultation based on the common interests of local communities (Mulgan, 1997, pp. 194-195). Here two options are proposed, one to create Regional Development Boards (RDBs), and the second to create Regional Councils (RCs). The second option, RCs, would be the more expensive and expansive option, since it is a political tier, hence the first, RDBs, might be the preferred option at the initial stages. This may also be why the report of joint government and UNDP mission on *Strengthening Decentralised Governance in the Maldives* also reserves RCs for its second phase of reform (Joint Government and UNDP Mission, 2005). See Table 8.1 for a summarised description of the proposed local government models.

Table 8.1: Description of proposed sub-tiers for the local government system			
Description	Local Government Tiers		
	<i>Island Councils</i>	<i>Atoll Councils</i>	<i>Regional Councils/Development Boards</i>
<i>Hierarchy</i>	Third and the lowest level	Second level	First level
<i>No. of Councillors</i>	Based on the population	At least one representative for each island community	At least two representatives for each atoll community
<i>Elected by</i>	Island communities through a popular vote Island Chief or Head of the island council is elected by the community	Atoll councillors are elected from amongst island councils so that island council or island communities can be represented and informed easily Atoll Chief or Head of the Atoll Council can be elected by atoll councillors from amongst Atoll Council or by atoll community with a popular vote	Regional Councillors/Board members are elected from amongst Atoll Councillors Regional Chief/Head of the Regional Council can be elected by regional community or by regional councillors from amongst regional councillors Chairperson of the Board is elected within the members
<i>Term</i>	3 years	3 years	3 years
<i>Functions</i>	Care taker of island community by making sure that all required facilities at island level are provided for its wellbeing, including health, education, water and sanitation, island level transport network, recreation and civil defence Responsible for planning and implementation of socio-economic activities at the island level. Should be allowed to engage in socio-economic enterprises	Care taker of atoll community by managing atoll level natural resources, protecting the environment, managing atoll level transport and communication network, and atoll level civil defence Responsible for all planning and promoting socio-economic activities at the atoll level. Should be engaged in pooling and facilitating resources to develop socio-economic infrastructures at the atoll level	Care taker of regional development/natural resources/Regional harbours and ports/ Airports and develop regional level transport and communication network Responsible for all planning and promoting socio-economic activities at the regional level. Responsible for pooling and coordinating resources to develop socio-economic infrastructures at the regional level Should provide atolls with technical expertise in development planning and implementation

Introducing a new regional level into the proposed local governance system could address the current problem of resource constraints, especially human resources and funding. Technical expertise could be located at the regional level, which in turn would help the lower level authorities in their respective constituencies. In a similar way, pooling the resources at the regional level for infrastructure development would increase the scope of socio-economic viability while reducing diseconomies of scale in some cases. Promotion of the regional level tier would also create an environment for services and revenue sharing, as practised in the Bay of Plenty region of New Zealand.

Based on what has been discussed above, the proposed model is designed to bring people closer to the system and vice versa. In this option there would be two political tiers of local government, see Option 1 in Figure 8.3. The first option or a regional tier, Regional Development Boards (RDBs), would not be a political arm like Regional Councils, but more involved in socio-economic, environmental and cultural development. The main objective of the RDBs would be to pool resources and funding at the regional level for development, as well as to address diseconomies of scale and increase the scope by revenue sharing in socio-economic infrastructure development. In addition, the RDBs would also have the human resource capacity in areas such as the technical expertise required for the region, atolls and islands (i.e. engineering and planning). The Executive Officers for the RDBs would be appointed by Atoll Representatives. In the second option, Regional Councils would be the hierarchically highest tiers in local government, see Option 2 in Figure 8.3.

As stated earlier, the proposed model of the local government would be an expensive and expansive system, requiring potential avenues for revenue generation by local authorities. The researcher asked the field informants in the Maldives who recommended a decentralised or local government system how they considered local authorities could finance such a system if it were to be established. The majority pointed to the uninhabited islands within their atolls, which in most cases are being not used productively. Many of these islands are leased out to elite members of Maldives society at very nominal rents. According to most informants, if these uninhabited islands were used more wisely and local authorities placed in charge, these islands could generate revenue. Even if central government taxed local authorities on the income derived, they could still be run at a profit. One community group pointed to a neighbouring island and remarked: “if the government gives us just this island than we won’t need anything from the government, even a cent to develop our island”. One participant from the group then laughingly added, “Oh yeah! We will make our island second to Singapore” (Fieldwork, Maldives, November 2005 – May 2006). This may be an exaggeration; however, it also has an element of truth. Uninhabited islands in the Maldives are very potential natural resources which could be used for commercial or industrial purposes, such as tourism, agriculture and fisheries. Today, tourism in the Maldives is flourishing because of the attractiveness of its islands and the calm, clear waters and white sand of their beaches. There are many islands left idle in the hands of elites and colleagues of the government officials who are not investing in their development. Table 8.2 presents a profile of the number of inhabited and uninhabited islands and the populations of each atoll, in order to provide the basis for a clearer understanding of the argument.

Table 8.2: Numbers of inhabited and uninhabited island and population of each atoll in the⁴¹ Maldives							
Atolls	No. of Islands		Population	Atolls	No. of Islands		Population
	Inhabited	uninhabited			Inhabited	uninhabited	
<i>Haa Alifu</i>	14	28	13,495	<i>Vaavu</i>	5	14	1,606
<i>Haa Dhaalu</i>	16	19	16,237	<i>Meemu</i>	8	25	4,710
<i>Shaviyani</i>	14	36	11,940	<i>Faafu</i>	5	18	3,765
<i>Noonu</i>	13	58	10,015	<i>Dhaalu</i>	7	49	4,967
<i>Raa</i>	15	73	14,756	<i>Thaa</i>	13	53	8,493
<i>Baa</i>	13	62	9,578	<i>Laamu</i>	12	70	11,990
<i>Lhaviyani</i>	5	47	9,190	<i>Gaafu Alifu</i>	10	72	8,262
<i>Kaafu</i>	9	98	15,441	<i>Gaafu Dhaalu</i>	9	144	11,013
<i>Alifu Alifu</i>	8	25	5,776	<i>Gnaviyani</i>	1	0	7,636
<i>Alifu Dhaalu</i>	10	39	8,379	<i>Seenu</i>	6	17	18,026

Source: data from (MoAD, 2004)

⁴¹ Some 54 uninhabited islands are missing from the data.

As can be seen from Table 8.2, only one atoll, Gnaviyani, has no uninhabited islands. Some of these uninhabited islands are very small and may not justify investment; however, many are large enough to support the development of resorts or other commercial ventures. In addition to this, some informants also pointed to Atoll shops and the way they are currently run. Atoll shops are shops owned by each atoll and located at the most prime location, the harbour front in Malé. If properly developed, made more competitive or leased out at the market value, they could generate significant incomes for their respective atolls. These potential areas of income are just two examples. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that, while investment would create a financial burden in the short-term, in the long-term the proposed system would generate hundreds of thousands of Rufiyaa to offset the current high costs of transport and communication as well as administration throughout the archipelago. A decentralised governance system would also generate direct and indirect employment opportunities in the islands, atolls and regions, which would have a flow on, positive impact on the socio-economic livelihoods of all islanders.

Having proposed a constitutionally decentralised⁴² local government system this thesis now also proposes an interactive and participatory governance model that might enable the system to address socio-economic and environmental vulnerability more effectively. The proposed governance model would give space for all stakeholders of the state, public, private and civil society, hence would be more inclusive and cohesive. An interactive decentralised system would be more appropriate than a centrally controlled system to govern dispersed small island archipelagic communities. It would enable increased coordination, collaboration and participation amongst the stakeholders and island communities. The proposed good governance model is illustrated in Figure 8.4 as a completed house with all the elements required to provide shelter and socio-economic and environmental security. The model represents the citizens of the nation as the household and the house in the place of the nation. The foundation of the house posits civil justice, because that should be the foundation for any governance system.

⁴² I am giving an emphasis to changes and proposed models that could be institutionalised constitutionally by statute, to prevent then being abolished or changed by an arbitrary decision.

Figure 8.4: Governance model: Building blocks for good governance to address vulnerability and promote well-being in the Maldives

Keys: The followings denote:

: the foundation of the 'Good governance house' which is civil justice; : the key pillars of the state governance, levels of government and stake holders; : the building blocks, the key elements of good governance; : the key objectives and goals for local authorities; : the roof; : strong interaction and checks and balances; ⋯→: interaction and linkages; : common interests and targets for all stakeholders; ---: separation of common stakeholders; : interconnection and reciprocal impact, and : interlocking web between the key pillars and building blocks.

As demonstrated in Figure 8.4, the model endeavours to incorporate the major concerns of the people highlighted by the field data from the Maldives and Vanuatu in chapters 4, 5, and 6, such as provision of an inclusive space for civil society, especially NGOs and CBOs, in their countries' governance. It has been shown that government alone cannot address socio-economic and environmental vulnerability or

reach the people in archipelagos like the Maldives and Vanuatu where communities are dispersed on numbers of distant small islands. It will need contribution from all stakeholders of the state governance. Therefore, it is necessary to have an interactive governance system as in Bavinck's model of governance, see Figure 3.4.

Because the proposed model would be more interactive and closer to the people, it could concentrate more easily than the current system on addressing people's needs and well-being, including health and education, which are vital factors in reducing vulnerability of these communities. However, the proposed governance model could only work effectively if there was a conducive environment in which to provide all the necessary privileges, rights and authority. Such an environment should be created by statute. The following recommendations would enhance the proposed system:

- Functions, responsibilities and limitations of local authorities should be clearly defined by statute;
- Power and authorities should be delegated by statute;
- Human resource building should be an ongoing and constant approach at all levels of government;
- Transport and communication networks within atolls and regions should be improved;
- Rigorous funding mechanisms should be institutionalised such as introduction of tariffs, charges, rates, and taxation, and
- Central government should allocate sufficient budget for development activities to the local authorities

Although these proposed decentralised emergency management and governance systems should be more effective than centrally-controlled systems in addressing socio-economic and environmental vulnerability, island communities should also be empowered in terms of local opportunities. To empower these communities, there is a need to focus on vulnerability reduction and address the factors that have been responsible for increasing vulnerability in these archipelagic communities. Field data from both the Maldives and Vanuatu revealed that lack of accessibility to basic goods and services and limited socio-economic opportunities are the main causes for the countries' increasing socio-economic vulnerability, see chapters 4, 5, and 6, and

Figure 6.3. Therefore, this very crucial issue will be briefly discussed, together with recommendations which could help address some of these socio-economic problems.

8.2.3 Creation of more socio-economic opportunities

Small size, isolation, geographical and ecological nature, fragility, insularity, and remoteness have been identified as the main challenges to improve socio-economic opportunities in these archipelagic communities (see Box 1.1). In addition, these factors also pose increasing challenges in terms of developing socio-economic infrastructure because of high per unit costs for accessibility and provisioning.

Field informants from both the Maldives and Vanuatu identified that weather-related or environmental vulnerability mainly occur seasonally and periodically. Although such ‘transient’ vulnerability has socio-economic consequences such as loss of life, destruction of assets and property, and failure of livelihood activities, the informants from both countries felt that it is more important to address ‘chronic’ vulnerability, in other words, the lack of accessibility to basic goods and services, and socio-economic opportunities, first. The perception was that people cannot respond to or recover from transient vulnerability unless chronic vulnerability is addressed by ensuring local communities are socio-economically empowered. It is, therefore, vitally important to address these aspects if a sustainable approach is to be adopted in terms of vulnerability reduction, readiness, response to and recovery. There may be no ‘ready-made’ solution for these inevitable challenges, but one option could be ‘adopt and trial’, based on theoretical and empirical evidence while learning from mistakes.

Since the late 1990s, the government of the Maldives has been implementing a Regional Development Programme (RDP) aiming to increase economic and employment opportunities in the atolls, to make the atolls prosperous and their people more healthy, better educated and resilient (see chapter 4). Under the RDP, the country is divided into five regions and has begun establishing growth centres, shifting from its age-old one zone development policy based on the capital and its vicinity. The RDP has so far not been very successful and has seen very few spill-over benefits, according to people’s perceptions (see chapter 4). Nevertheless, in the

long-term, the project may be able to achieve its objectives, if responsive and responsible political commitment is backed up by a strong and interactive governance system, as proposed above in Figures 8.3 and 8.4.

However, there is also a need to take extra measures to create more socio-economic opportunities and engage island communities, allowing them “to become *development makers* rather than *development takers* [*emphasis in original*]” (McCall, 2003, p. 107). In fact, the researcher has seen through his own observations as a development practitioner that, to a great extent, these small island communities are already development makers, but they lack a strong local government system to function as a provider, facilitator and coordinator. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the level of development which these island communities of the Maldives are enjoying today is due to their own initiatives. However, they can only be maintained and enhanced as development makers if they are better empowered socio-economically.

Therefore, the government of archipelagic states like the Maldives should consider establishing Community Economic Development Models (CDEM), promoting entrepreneurship and introducing small and medium business enterprises within the island communities (McCall, 2003). Economic development can be an important instrument to reduce unemployment and increase avenues for income and other socio-economic resources and utilities at the macro and micro levels (Waugh, 2003). It is also important to bear in mind that health and education have great impact on the economic behaviour and performance of people (Szirmai, 2005). Human capital cannot be effective or productive without good health and education. Both are crucially important for sustainable empowerment and, therefore, people must have access to education and healthcare services. However, field findings from the Maldives and Vanuatu show (see chapters 4, 5 and 6), that there is always a cost to access to these services. These enhanced services will need to be paid for by economic development and create more socio-economic opportunities with increased education and health facilities.

Promotion of entrepreneurship and introduction of small and medium business will require some pre-conditional initiatives in order to motivate members of communities to take part. The government of the Maldives should institutionalise local administrations in a way that facilitates such an environment, by creating produce markets, easing accessibility to islands, and improving transport and communication networks. This will encourage islanders to engage, retain and expand local business. At the financing end, government should start providing people who are motivated to become involved in entrepreneurship with financial incentives. For example, government could initiate with direct and indirect public financing programmes (investments of public monies in specific firms or sites or encouraging private sector investment by improving infrastructure), creating revolving funds⁴³ in all atolls to provide seed capital, initiate loan guarantees and tax abatement programmes for first generation entrepreneurs (Waugh, 2003). The private sector needs to be brought in to promote economic initiatives and although initially they may be reluctant to invest in areas where infrastructure and services are poor, interest will increase with success. The best option is to invest in ongoing programmes, such as establishment of regional and atoll development centres and growth centres (see chapter 4) with more robust policy measures. The programmes should be re-engineered to adjust to new changes under the reform process when and where they are required. The improved socio-economic policies and programmes should aim to empower the island communities by increasing opportunities, achieve more prosperity and reduce socio-economic vulnerability. Figure 8.5 shows how these island communities would be empowered through improved and robust socio-economic policies and programmes in terms of integral targets.

⁴³ The government of the Maldives has already established Atoll Development Funds, in 6 atolls, see chapter 4.

Figure 8.5: Description of ultimate targets resulting from improved and robust socio-economic policies and programmes for island communities in the Maldives

It is vitally important to have a strong state governance system based on good governance and democratic values in order to enhance social justice and hear public grievances. Promoting good governance values would also enable government institutions to promote transparency and accountability in implementing and operating socio-economic policies and programmes with public trust and strong support. This could prevent people from walking away with public money or bankrupting public enterprises. However, this would require a community empowered by education and awareness that could speak out for their rights but also be held accountable for misbehaviours. Indeed, this would need enormous efforts at all levels, national, local and communal. At the same time, this thesis also suggests creating a strong civil justice system by separating state executive bodies from the judiciary and legislature, including local levels, as illustrated in Figure 8.6. This would allow government and non-government ‘watch-dog’ bodies, such as the Anti-

corruption Commission, Ombudsman, Auditor General, and NGOs, to be actively involved in promoting the process of good governance.

In parallel with these changes in institutional arrangements, the following recommendations are crucially important to enhance socio-economic empowerment of the island communities and strengthen economic ventures and initiatives.

- Local authorities to be given statutory rights to engage in business in promoting socio-economic goods and services;
- Each island community to be provided with '*resource centres*' through which entrepreneurial communities can be connected via Internet and other Information Technology sources to exchange ideas and check for current market price for their products;
- Island communities to be connected with regular and affordable intra atoll and regional transport and communication networks;

- First generation of entrepreneurs to be provided with financial incentives, such as loan guarantees, tax abatements and seed capitals through revolving funds;
- First generation of entrepreneurs to be facilitated to easy access to land tenancy with a subsidised land premium;
- Island communities to be provided with education and training to increase the capacity amongst the members of these communities;
- Vocational training courses to be designed with coordination of both island, atoll and regional bodies so the courses can be oriented on locally viable areas and addressed local needs;
- Youths from both genders who may not have access to education beyond island level to be encouraged and provided with opportunities and incentives to undergo vocational training, and
- Some form of entrepreneurship education to be introduced to school children through social science and fisheries subjects

Even though they may require further studies in order to make them more specific and applicable, the above proposed models for disaster management and governance and suggestions for improving the socio-economy and livelihoods of the island communities will make a significant contribution towards addressing the chronic and transient vulnerability of small archipelagic communities.

8.3 Caveats

The proposals above might contribute to a stronger and more resilient disaster management system in the Maldives. However, two important qualifications need to be made in considering their wider applicability.

Firstly, as already mentioned in this chapter (Section 8.2) the proposed models are one possible solution, not the only solution. It has also been maintained throughout the thesis that socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities in Small Developing Archipelagic States can be addressed through a comprehensive and inclusive governance system. It would require an outreaching system with a great

political commitment. However, the thesis notes here that, even with strong governance systems, there might be problems. Hurricane Katrina hit and devastated the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and New Orleans, USA in 29 August 2005. How it was handled by the US governments, local, state and federal, is an example of bad practice of a system known for its good governance⁴⁴. Four months after the catastrophic event of Katrina, Gutmann (2006, p. vii) comments on how it was handled by the US administration:

More than four months have passed since Hurricane Katrina struck. We now know that our affluent country failed both to take adequate precautions against the hurricane's deadly impact and to respond effectively to its devastation of New Orleans and other Gulf cost areas.

Blame has been mainly placed on the policy makers' inadequate response to Katrina due to their "poor planning, poor execution and a fundamental ignorance of emergency management" at all levels, Local, State, and Federal (Jr William L. Waugh, 2006, p. 6). Waugh (2006, pp. 7-8) identifies the following four key areas of failures caused in dealing with Katrina, and urges the US administration to focus on these areas in order to repair the nation's emergency management system from which any country can learn lessons. They are:

- 1) "Failure to mitigate hazards long recognised within the scientific and emergency management communities led to a far larger disaster than would have otherwise resulted from a Category 3 storm";
- 2) "An over-centralisation of decision-making led to long delays in mobilising and deploying critical human and material resources";
- 3) "Public officials responsible for dealing with the disaster knew little or nothing about emergency management and how to use the nation's emergency management expertise", and
- 4) "Failures of leadership were apparent at all levels and contributed to the chaos and resulted in a loss of public confidence. There was no one to provide a focus for the relief effort and to ensure that federal, state, and local operations were coordinated" (Jr William L. Waugh, 2006, pp. 7-8).

Waugh (2006, p. 20) further explains that the region was severely devastated from Katrina because "poverty and racial distrust complicated the disaster and the response. Confusion over local and state emergency operation plans complicated the evacuations and everything that followed". Even today, it has been a mystery unsolved by the US administration after three years of Katrina.

⁴⁴ The recent catastrophic events of Burma from Cyclone Nargis on 2nd May 2008 and the way it was managed by rulers of the country represents bad practice by an unpopular regime known for its bad governance.

Secondly, it is important to highlight that the extrapolation of a system from one place to another may not work because no one size fits all. Indeed, we can learn from policy models and practices and see how they could work for another place. They should be modified based on the nature, environment, and cultural differences of the country. For example, fundamental ignorance of Islamic values in designing a system could bring ultimate backlash and failure in the Maldives, while ignorance and breaking the role of the religious and customary institutions in Vanuatu in terms of upholding people's welfare and wellbeing could be an expensive and unbearable socio-cultural disaster. It is, therefore, critically important to consider socio-cultural context when designing or importing a system, policy model and practice for a fruitful result.

8.4 Implications of the findings for future research

The overall objective of this research project involved identifying the gaps in governance in Small Developing Archipelagic States, and how are they addressing their increasing socio-economic and environmental vulnerability. It also involved finding some possible solutions to address the gaps and recommended implementation of improved systems and policies for reducing vulnerability. The field data have shown that the communities of the Small Developing Archipelagic States, the Maldives and Vanuatu, are not only socio-economically and environmentally vulnerable due to their geographically and ecologically inherited nature but also, to a great extent, to their ineffective systems of governance. The thesis has discussed key problematic areas of the findings and proposed some models that could address those problems and gaps. Each area identified in this chapter (Section 8.1) as key problems and challenges can be explored in future research. Especially the proposed local government tiers and cluster approach for disaster management and the extent of socio-economic infrastructure development might need to be enhanced and the models further explored. In addition, possible measures and policy models can also be future research areas, in order to increase the socio-economic empowerment for small island communities.

Bibliography

- Abbott, D., & Pollard, S. (2004). Hardship and poverty in the Pacific Available from <http://www.adb.org>.
- ADB (2001a). Business information guide to the Pacific islands Available from <http://www.adb.org>.
- ADB (2001b). Vanuatu: Fisheries and agriculture sector review 2000 Available from <http://www.adb.org>.
- ADB (2002). Poverty reduction in the Maldives: Issues, findings, and approaches Available from <http://www.adb.org>
- ADB (2003). Priorities of the people: Hardship in Vanuatu Available from <http://www.adb.org>.
- ADB (2005). Conceptualizing and measuring poverty as vulnerability: Does it make a difference? *ERD Policy Brief No.41*. Retrieved from <http://www.asiandevbank.org>.
- Alsop, R., Bertelsen, M. F., & Holland, J. (2006). Empowerment in practice: From analysis to implementation Available from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org>
- Armstrong, H. W., & Read, R. (2004). Insularity, remoteness, mountains and archipelagos: A combination of challenges facing small states? *Regional Studies Association Conference*. Retrieved August 4, 2007, from www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk.
- Baker, J. L. (2000). *Evaluating the impact of development projects on poverty: A handbook for practitioners*: World Bank
- Bass, S., & Dalal-Clayton, B. (1995). *Small island states and sustainable development: Strategic issues and experience* Retrieved May 20, 2005, from <http://www.nssd.net>.
- Bavinck, M., Chenpagdee, R., Diallo, M., Heijden, P. v. d., Kooiman, J., Mahon, R., et al. (2005). Interactive fisheries governance: A guide to better practice Available from <http://www.fishgovnet.org>.
- Bay of Plenty Emergency Management (2005). Bay of Plenty civil defence emergency management group plan 2005 Available from <http://www.envbop.govt.nz>.
- Berg, B. L. (1998). *Qualitative research methods for social science* (3rd ed.). Boston, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo, Singapore: Allyn and Bacon.

- Berkes, F., & Folke, C. (1998). *Linking social and ecological systems management: Practices and social mechanisms for building resilience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- BERL (2007). *Bay of Plenty economic transformation: Stage 1: Situation analysis*. Retrieved August 29, 2008, from <http://www.ebop.govt.nz>.
- Bernard, G. S. (2007). *Measuring social vulnerability in Caribbean states*. Paper presented at the 8th SALISES Annual Conference, Crisis, Chaos and Change: Caribbean Development Challenges in the 21st Century. Retrieved August 4, 2007, from <http://sta.vuw.edu>.
- Bernard, H. R. (2000). *Social research methods, qualitative and quantitative approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Bevan, S. (1990). *Vanuatu Rozelle*, N.S.W: Other People Publications.
- Birkmann, J. (2006). Measuring vulnerability to promote disaster-resilient societies: Conceptual frameworks and definitions. In J. Birkmann (Ed.), *Measuring vulnerability to natural hazards: Towards disaster resilient societies*. Tokyo, New York, Paris: United Nations University Press.
- Blaikie, P., Cannon, T., Davis, I., & Wisner, B. (1994). *At risk: Natural hazards people's vulnerability and disasters*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bogardi, J. J. (2006). Introduction. In J. Birkmann (Ed.), *Measuring vulnerability to natural hazards: Towards disaster resilient societies*. Tokyo, New York, Paris: United Nations University Press.
- Bohle, H. G., Downing, T. E., & Watts, M. J. (1994). Climate change and social vulnerability; towards a sociology and geography of food insecurity. *Global Environment Change* 4(1), 37-48. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com>.
- Bouma, G. D. (2000). *The research process* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Briguglio, L. (2003). *The vulnerability index and Small Island Developing States: A review of conceptual and methodological issues*. Paper presented at the AIMS Regional Preparatory Meeting on the BPoA+10 Review. Retrieved February 3, 2007, from <http://www.sidsnet.org>.
- Briguglio, L. (2004). *Economic vulnerability and resilience: Concepts and measurements*. Paper presented at the Vulnerability and Resilience of Small States. Retrieved February 3, 2007, from <http://home.um.edu.mt>.
- Brockington, D., & Sullivan, S. (2003). Qualitative research. In R. Scheyvens & D. Storey (Eds.), *Development fieldwork: A practical guide* (pp. 57-74). London: Sage Publication.

- Bush, G. (1997). Local government. In R. Miller (Ed.), *New Zealand politics in transition* (pp. 117-124). Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Cain, T. N., & Jowitt, A. (2004). *Transparency: International & national integrity systems, Vanuatu 2004*. Canberra: Transparency International Australia and Asia Pacific School of Economics and Governance at the Australian National University.
- Campbell, J. (1995). *Pacific island vulnerability to environmental change*. Paper presented at the Eighteenth of Conference of the New Zealand Geographical Society, University of Canterbury.
- Campbell, J. (1998). *Consolidating mutual assistance in disaster management within the Pacific: Principles and application*. Paper presented at the Seventh South Pacific Regional IDNDR Disaster Management Meeting Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, Fiji.
- Campbell, J. (2003). *Geography, vulnerability and nature*. Paper presented at the Windows on a Changing World: Proceedings of the 22nd New Zealand Geographical Society Conference, School of Geography and Environmental Science, The University of Auckland.
- Cannon, T., Twigg, J., & Rowell, J. (2003). *Social vulnerability, sustainable livelihoods and disasters* Retrieved August 8, 2007, from <http://www.livelihoods.org>.
- Caribbean Development Bank (2000). *Comparative vulnerability to natural disasters in the Caribbean* Retrieved August 4, 2007, from www.sur.iucn.org.
- Chambers, R. (2003). *Whose reality counts?: Putting the first last*. London: ITDG Publishing.
- Chambers, R. (2005). *IDEAS for development*. London, Sterling, VA: Earthscan.
- Chambers, R. (2006). Vulnerability, coping and policy (editorial introduction). *IDS Bulletin*, 37(4), 33-40 Retrieved from <http://www.ingentaconnect.com>.
- Chambers, R., & Conway, G. R. (1991). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21st century* Retrieved August 8, 2007, from <http://www.ids.ac.uk>.
- Chang, H.-J. (2002). *Kicking away the ladder: Development strategy in historical perspective*. London: Anthem Press.
- Cheema, G. S., & Rondinelli, D. A. (Eds.). (2007). *Decentralizing governance: Emerging concepts and practices*. Washington, D.C.: Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Brookings Institution Press.

- Chensavasdijai, V., & Nakabayashi, S. (2007). *Vanuatu: Selected issues* Retrieved February 26, 2008, from <http://www.imf.org>.
- Cheyne, C. (2006). Local government. In R. Miller (Ed.), *New Zealand government and politics* (pp. 285-295). Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Chowdhary, N., & Skarstedt, C. E. (2005). *The principle of good governance* Retrieved June 20, 2007, from <http://www.cisdl.org>.
- Christians, C. G. (2000). Ethics and politics in qualitative research In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). California: Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.
- CIA (n.d.). *The world fact book* Retrieved May 3, 2007, from <https://www.cia.gov>.
- Clark, H. (2007). *Opening address*. Paper presented at the Commonwealth Local Government Conference, Aotea Centre, Auckland.
- Clark, J. (1991). *Democratizing development: The role of voluntary organizations*. USA: Kumarian Press.
- CLGF (2008). *Local government system in Vanuatu* Retrieved June 14, 2008, from <http://www.clgf.org.uk>.
- Combes, J.-L., & Guillaumont, P. (2002). Commodity price volatility, vulnerability and development *Development Policy Review*, 20(1), 25-39. Retrieved from <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com>.
- Commission of the EU Communities (2001). *European governance: White paper* Retrieved July 18, 2007, from <http://europe.eu>.
- Commission of the EU Communities (2007). *Governance in the European Union: A white paper* Retrieved July 18, 2007, from <http://ec.europa.eu>.
- Commission on Global Governance (1995). *Our global neighbourhood: The report of the commission on global governance*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Commonwealth (1997a). *A future for Small States, Overcoming Vulnerability*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Commonwealth (1997b). *A future for small states: Overcoming vulnerability*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Commonwealth (1997c). *Small states: A composite vulnerability index* Retrieved May 28, 2005, from <http://ctrc.sice.oas.org>.
- Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States (2000). *Small states: Meeting challenges in the global economy*. London, Washington, DC.: Commonwealth Secretariat, The World Bank.

- Constitution of the Local Government New Zealand* (2001/2005). Retrieved June 11, 2008, from <http://www.lgnz.co.nz>.
- Cordina, G. (2004). Economic vulnerability and economic growth: Some results from a neo-classical growth modelling. *Journal of Economic Development*, 29(2), 21-39.
- Court, J., Hyden, G., & Mease, K. (2002). *Assessing governance: Methodological challenges* Retrieved June 5, 2007, from <http://www.odi.org.uk>.
- Cowen, M. P., & Shenton, R. W. (1996). *Doctrines of development*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Cox, N., & Miller, R. (2006). Head of state In R. Miller (Ed.), *New Zealand government and politics* (4th ed., pp. 130-144). Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). London, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Cutter, S. L., Boruff, B. J., & Sirley, W. L. (2003). Social vulnerability to environmental hazards. *Social Science Quarterly*, 84(2), 242-261. Retrieved from <http://www.blackwell-synergy>.
- Cutter, S. L., Mitchell, J. T., & Scott, M. S. (2000). Revealing the vulnerability of people and place: A case study of Georgetown County, South Carolina. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 90(4), 713-737. Retrieved from <http://www.cas.sc.edu>.
- Dayton-Johnson, J. (2006). *Natural disaster and vulnerability* Retrieved July 23 2007, from <http://miranda.sourceoecd.org>.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2005). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). New Delhi, London: Sage Publications.
- Desai, V., & Potter, R. B. (2002). *The companion to development studies*: Arnold and Oxford University Press, Inc.
- DescionMaker (2004). *Guide to local government in New Zealand*: DecisionsMaker Publications.
- DESP (2006). *Priorities and action agenda 2006 - 2015: An educated, healthy and wealthy Vanuatu*: Department of Economics and Sector Planning, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
- Doornbos, M. (2003). "Good governance": The metamorphosis of a policy metaphor. *Journal of International Affairs*, 57(1), 3-17. Retrieved from <http://jia.sipa.columbia.edu>.

- Dow, K. (1992). Exploring differences in our common future(s): The meaning of vulnerability to global environmental change. *Geoforum*, 23(3), 417-436. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com>.
- Duncan, R. (2003). *Governance and growth: Theory and empirics-where do we stand?* Retrieved May 16, 2005, from <http://www.usp.ac.fj>.
- Duncan, R. (2005). *Democratic governance and security* Retrieved May 16, 2006, from <http://www.usp.ac.fj>.
- Duncan, R., & Toatu, T. (2004). *Measuring improvements in governance in the Pacific island countries* Retrieved May 16, 2005, from <http://www.usp.ac.fj>.
- Duncan, R., Toatu, T., & Gani, A. (2004). *A conceptual framework for the development of a composite governance index for the Pacific island countries* Retrieved May 16, 2005, from <http://www.usp.ac.fj>.
- Dundua, N. (2006). *Delimitation of maritime boundaries between adjacent states* Retrieved July 19 2007, from <http://www.un.org>.
- Easter, C. (1999). Small states development: A commonwealth vulnerability index. *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 351(1), 403-422. Retrieved from <http://www.ingentaconnect.com>.
- Edwards, M. (2004). *Civil society*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Environment B.O.P (2001). Profile 2001: A socio-economic profile of the people of the Bay of Plenty Region - Census 2001 Available from <http://www.envbop.govt.nz>.
- Environment B.O.P (2007/2008). *Environment Bay of Plenty annual plan 2008/2009* Retrieved August 29 2008, from <http://www.ebop.govt.nz>.
- Environment B.O.P (2008). *Our region* Retrieved August 27, 2008, from <http://www.envbop.govt.nz>.
- Environment Bay of Plenty (2006). *Regional passenger transport plan* Retrieved November 28 2007, from <http://www.envbop.govt.nz>.
- Environment Bay of Plenty (2008). *Ohiwa harbour strategy* Retrieved July 1, 2008, from <http://www.envbop.govt.nz>.
- EU and Vanuatu (2002). *EU/Vanuatu 2002, joint annual report* Retrieved March 3, 2008, from <http://ec.europa.eu>.
- Finer, S. E. (1970). *Comparative government*. London: Allen Lane.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2005). The interview from neutral stance to political involvement. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of*

qualitative research (3rd ed., pp. 695-727). London, New York: Sage Publications.

- Ford, J. (2002). *Vulnerability: Concepts and issues; a literature review of the concept of vulnerability, its definition, and application in studies dealing with human-environment interactions* Retrieved August 8, 2007, from <http://www.arctic-north.com>.
- FSPI (2003). Assessing community perspectives on governance in Vanuatu pp. 68-160). Available from <http://www.fspi.org.fj>.
- Fung, A., & Wright, E. O. (2001). Deepening democracy: Innovations in empowered participatory governance. *Politics & Society*, 29(1), 5-41. Retrieved from <http://www.archonfung.net>.
- Gabor, T., & Griffith, T. K. (1980). The assessment of community vulnerability to acute hazardous materials incidents. *Journal of Hazardous Materials*, 3(4), 323-333. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com>.
- Gani, A., & Duncan, R. (2004). *Fiji's governance index* Retrieved May 16 2005, from <http://www.usp.ac.fj>.
- Gasper, D. (2004). *The ethics of development: From economism to human development*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- GEF and UNDP (2004). Pacific regional energy assessment, Vanuatu report Available from <http://www.sprep.org>.
- Gellner, E. (1995). The importance of being modular. In J. A. Hall (Ed.), *Civil society: Theory, history, comparison*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Goetz, A. M., & O'Brien, D. (1995). Governing for the common wealth? The World Bank's approach to poverty and governance. *IDS Bulletin*, 26(2), 17-26.
- Goldsmith, A. A. (2007). Is governance reform a catalyst for development? *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, 20(2), 165-186. Retrieved from <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com>.
- Gray, D. E. (2004). *Doing research in the real world*. London: Sage Publication.
- Green, C., & Penning-Roswell, E. (2007). More or less than words? Vulnerability as discourse. In L. McFadden, R. J. Nicholls & E. Penning-Roswell (Eds.), *Managing coastal vulnerability* (1st ed., pp. 29-43). Amsterdam, Oxford: Elsevier.
- Grindle, M. S. (2004). Good enough governance: Poverty reduction and reform in developing countries. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, 17(4), 526-548. Retrieved from <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com>.

- The Guide to the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan* (2006). Retrieved June 19, 2008, from <http://www.civildefence.govt.nz>.
- Guillaumont, P. (2007). *Assessing the economic vulnerability of Small Island Developing States and the Least Developing Countries* Retrieved August 4, 2007, from <http://www.wider.unu.edu>.
- Gutmann, A. (2006). Foreward. In R. J. Daniels, D. F. Kettl & H. Kunreuther (Eds.), *On risk and disaster: Lessons from Hurricane Katrina* (pp. vii-viii). Philadelphia: PENN, University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Harper, C. (1996). Strengthening civil society in transitional East Asia In A. Clayton (Ed.), *NGOs, civil society and the state: Building democracy in transitional societies* (pp. 125-140). UK: INTRAC.
- Harrison, G. (2005). The World Bank, governance and theories of political action in Africa. *BJPIR*, 7, 240-260. Retrieved from <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com>.
- Hau'ofa, E. (1993). Our sea of islands. In E. Waddell, V. Naidu & E. Hau'ofa (Eds.), *A new oceania: Rediscovering our sea of islands*. Suva, Fiji: Beake House.
- Hay, J. E., Mimura, N., Campbell, J., Fifita, S., Koshy, K., Mclean, R. F., et al. (2004). Facing up to Climate Change on Pacific Islands. *Pacific Ecologist, Autumn-Winter 2004*(Double Issue 7 & 8), 36-42.
- Hayward, M. (2006). Prime minister: Power. In R. Miller (Ed.), *New Zealand government and politics* (pp. 225-234). Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Helu, I. F. (1997). Tradition and good governance. *State Society and Governance in Melanesia, Discussion Papers* Retrieved May 11 2005, from <http://rspas.anu.edu.au>.
- Henckel, T. (2006). Vanuatu's economy: Is the glass half empty or half full? *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, 21(3), 1-20. Retrieved from <http://peb.anu.edu.au>.
- Henderson, J. (2006). Governance and constitutional issues: Reflections on current problems and future options. In M. Powels (Ed.), *Pacific futures* (pp. 10-19). Canberra: Pandanus Books.
- Herrmann, T. M., Ronneberg, E., Brewster, M., & Dengo, M. (2004). *Social and economic aspects of disaster reduction, vulnerability and risk management in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)* Retrieved August 4 2007, from www.sidnet.org.
- Hewitt, K. (1983). The idea of calamity in a technocratic age. In K. Hewitt (Ed.), *Interpretations of calamity: From the viewpoint of human ecology* (pp. 1-30). Boston: Allen & Unwin.

- Hey, S. (2007). *Infrastructure fund - update on draft framework for assessing infrastructure funding proposals*. (Report of Strategic Policy Committee): Environment Bay of Plenty.
- Hince, K. (1996). The emergence of trade unionism in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu). *Journal of Pacific Studies* 19, 1-22. Retrieved from <http://www.usp.ac.fj>.
- Hindson, C. E. (1995). Educational planning in Vanuatu - an alternative analysis. *Comparative Education*, 31(3), 327-337. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org>.
- Hirst, P. (2000). Democracy and governance. In J. Pierre (Ed.), *Debating governance* (pp. 13-35). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Howorth, R. (2002). *The environmental vulnerability of Small Island Developing States* Paper presented at the UNDP Global Roundtable, Vulnerability and Small Island Developing States: Exploring Mechanisms for Partnerships. Retrieved January 9, 2007, from <http://www.undp.org>.
- Huffer, E., & Molisa, G. (1999a). Governance in Vanuatu. *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, 14(1), 101-111. Retrieved from <http://peb.anu.edu.au>.
- Huffer, E., & Molisa, G. (1999b). *Governance in Vanuatu: In search of the Nakamal way* Retrieved March 16, 2005, from <http://rspas.anu.edu.au>.
- Hulme, D., & Edwards, M. (Eds.). (1997). *NGOs, states and donors: Too close for comfort?* New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Huther, J., & Shah, A. (1998). *Applying a simple measure of good governance to the debate on fiscal decentralisation* Retrieved May 6, 2007, from <http://www.worldbank.org>.
- Hyden, G., & Court, J. (2002). Governance and development. *World Governance Survey Discussion Paper 1* Retrieved May 26, 2007, from <http://www.odi.org.uk>.
- Hyden, G., Court, J., & Mease, K. (2003,). Civil society and governance in 16 developing countries Retrieved May 26, 2007, from <http://www.odi.org.uk>.
- IPS (1980). *Vanuatu: Twenti wan tingting long team blong independens*. Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of South Pacific.
- Jayaraman, T. K., & Ward, B. D. (2006). Economic growth in a vulnerable island nation: An empirical study of the AID-growth nexus in Vanuatu. *Asia-Pacific Development Journal*, 13(2), 93-112. Retrieved from <http://www.unescap.org>.
- Jenkins, R. (2001). The emergence of the governance: Sovereignty, neo-liberal bias and the politics of international development. In V. Desai & R. Potter (Eds.), *The companion to development studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Jerety, J. (2007, October 5). Charitable Organisation Act needs review: NGOs. *Vanuatu Daily Post*, from <http://www.dailypost.vu>.
- Jessop, B. (1995). The regulation approach, governance, and post-Fordism: Alternative perspectives on economic and political change? *Economy and Society*, 24(3), 307-333. Retrieved from <http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk>.
- Joint Government and UNDP Mission (2005). *Strengthening decentralised governance in the Maldives (Draft report)*. Malé: MoAD & UNDP.
- Kaly, U., Pratt, C., & Howorth, R. (2002). A framework for managing environmental vulnerability in Small Island Developing States. *Development Bulletin*, 58. Retrieved from <http://www.sidsnet.org>.
- Kaufmann, D. (2005). *Myths and realities of governance and corruption* Retrieved March 17, 2007, from <http://www.worldbank.org>.
- Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Matruzzi, M. (2006). *Governance matters V: Aggregate and individual governance indicators for 1996-2005* Retrieved June 13, 2007, from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org>.
- Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Zoido-Lobaton, P. (1999). Aggregating governance indicators. *Policy Research Working Papers 2195* Retrieved June 6, 2005, from <http://www-wds.worldbank.org>.
- Kelly, P. M., & Adger, W. N. (2000). Theory and practice in assessing vulnerability to climate change and facilitating adaptation. *Climate Change*, 7, 325-352. Retrieved from <http://www.uea.ac.uk>.
- Kooiman, J., & Bavinck, M. (2005). The governance perspectives. In J. Kooiman, S. Jentoft, R. Pullin & M. Bavinck (Eds.), *Fish for life: Interactive governance for fisheries* (pp. 11-23). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Kruijk, H. d., & Rutten, M. (2007). *Vulnerability and poverty dynamics in the Maldives* Retrieved February 4, 2008, from <http://www.i4ide.org>.
- Ladley, A. (1997). The head of state: The crown, the queen and the governor-general In R. Miller (Ed.), *New Zealand politics in transition* (pp. 51-61). Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Lancaster, C. (1993). Governance and development: The views from Washington. *IDS Bulletin*, 24(1), 9-15.
- Larmour, P. (1996a). Models of governance and development administration Retrieved March 16, 2005, from <http://www.rspas.anu.edu.au>.
- Larmour, P. (1996b). *Research on governance in weak states in Melanesia* Retrieved March 16, 2005, from <http://www.rspas.anu.edu.au>.

- Larmour, P. (1997a). *Corruption and governance in the South Pacific* Retrieved March 16, 2005, from <http://www.rspas.anu.edu.au>.
- Larmour, P. (1997b). *Making sense of good governance* Retrieved March 16, 2005, from <http://www.rspas.anu.edu.au>.
- Larmour, P. (Ed.). (1998). *Governance and reform in the South Pacific*. Canberra: NCDS, National Centre for Development Studies, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies.
- Leftwich, A. (1993). Governance, democracy and development in the third world. *Third World Quarterly*, 14(3), 605-624. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.helicon.vuw.ac.nz>.
- Lewis, J. (1999). *Development in disaster-prone places: Studies of vulnerability*. London: Intermediate Technology Publication, Ltd.
- Ligon, E., & Schechter, L. (2002). Measuring vulnerability: The director's cut. *WIDER Discussion Paper No.2002/86* Retrieved May 3, 2007, from <http://www.aae.wisc.edu>.
- Local Government Act* (2002). Retrieved May 5, 2008, from <http://www.legislation.govt.nz>.
- Local Government New Zealand (2007). *Local government: Elected members' handbook 2007*. Wellington: Local Government New Zealand.
- Local Government New Zealand (2008a). *Local government sector: Community boards and chairs* Retrieved June 19, 2008, from <http://www.lgnz.co.nz>.
- Local Government New Zealand (2008b, June 2007). *Local government sector: Role of local government* Retrieved May 21, 2008, from <http://www.lgnz.co.nz>.
- Lovan, W. R., Murray, M., & Shaffer, R. (2004). Participatory governance in changing world. In W. R. Lovan, M. Murray & R. Shaffer (Eds.), *Participatory governance: Planning, conflict mediation and public decision-making in civil society*. Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Macdonald, B. (1998). 'Good' governance and pacific island states. In P. Larmour (Ed.), *Governance and reform in the South Pacific* (pp. 21-53). Canberra: NCDS, National Centre for Development Studies, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies.
- Manning, N., Mukherjee, R., & Gokcekus, O. (2000). *Public officials and their institutional environment: An analytical model for assessing the impact of institutional change on public sector performance* Retrieved June 5, 2005, from <http://www1.worldbank.org>.
- Marks, N., Simms, A., Thompson, S., & Abdallah, S. (2006). *The happy planet index* Retrieved February 18, 2008, from <http://www.neweconomics.org>.

- Martinussen, J. (1997). *Society, state and market: A guide to competing theories of development*. London & New Jersey: Pretoria: HSRC.
- Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. London: Sage.
- McCall, T. (2003). Institutional design for community economic development models: Issues of opportunity and capacity. *Community Development Journal* 38(2 April), 96-108.
- McEntire, D. A. (1999). Issues in disaster relief: Progress, perpetual problems and prospective solutions. *Disaster Prevention and Management*, 8(5), 351-361. Retrieved from <http://www.emeral-library.com>.
- McEntire, D. A. (2004). Development, disasters and vulnerability: A discussion of divergent theories and the need for their integration. *Disaster Prevention and Management*, 13(3), 193-198. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com>.
- McKenzie, E., Prasad, B., & Kaloumaira, A. (2005). *Economic impact of natural disasters on development in the Pacific* Retrieved July 13, 2006, from <http://www.usaid.gov.au>.
- McKinlay Douglas Limited (2006). *Local government structure and efficiency* (A report prepared for Local Government New Zealand). Wellington: Local Government New Zealand
- Mellor, T., & Jabes, J. (2004). *Governance in the Pacific: Focus for action 2005-2009* Retrieved May 11, 2007, from <http://www.asiadevbank.org>.
- Migdal, J. S. (1988). *Strong societies and weak states: State-society relations and state capabilities in the third world*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Migdal, J. S. (2001). *State in society: Studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mikkelsen, B. (2005). *Methods for development work and research: A new guide for practitioners* (2nd ed.). New Delhi, London: Sage Publications.
- Miles, W. F. S. (1998). *Bridging mental boundaries in a postcolonial microcosm: Identity and development in Vanuatu*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Minogue, M. (2002). Power to the people? Good governance and the reshaping of the state. In U. Kothari & M. Minogue (Eds.), *Development theory and practice - Critical perspectives*: Palgrave Publishing
- MoAD (2004). *Atoll navigator* Retrieved August 14, 2008, from <http://www.atolls.gov.mv>.

- MoAD (2007). *Draft law for the Island and Atoll Council (Final draft)* Retrieved August 14, 2007, from <http://www.atolls.gov.mv>.
- MoGF (2007). *Rules and regulations of Island Women's Development Committee* Retrieved December 26, 2007, from <http://www.mgf.gov.mv>.
- MOH (2004). *The Maldives health report, 2004* Retrieved January 3, 2008, from <http://www.health.gov>.
- Mohan, G. (2002). Participatory development. In V. Desai & R. B. Potter (Eds.), *The companion to development studies* (pp. 49-54). London: Arnold.
- Mohan, G., & Stokke, K. (2000). Participatory development and empowerment: The dangers of localism. *Third World Quarterly*, 21(2), 247-268. Retrieved from <http://www.informaworld.com>.
- Moore, M. (1993a). Declining to learn from the east? The World Bank on 'governance and development'. *IDS Bulletin*, 24(1), 39-50.
- Moore, M. (1993b). The emergence of the 'good government' agenda: Some milestones. *IDS Bulletin*, 24(1), 7-8.
- Moore, M. (1993c). Good government, introduction. *IDS Bulletin*, 24(1), 1-6.
- Moser, C. O. N. (1998). The asset vulnerability framework: Reassessing urban poverty reduction strategies. *World Development* 26(1), 1-19. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com>.
- MoTCA (2007,). List of registered resorts Retrieved January 9, 2008, from <http://www.tourism.gov.mv>.
- Mothe, J. d. I. (2006). *Innovation strategies in interdependent states: Essays on smaller nations, regions and cities in a globalised world*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Mourgues, A. (2005). *Republic of Vanuatu environment profile 2004*. Port-Vila: Republic of Vanuatu and European Commission.
- MPHRE (1997a). *Fifth national development plan* (1st ed.). Malé: Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment.
- MPHRE (1997b). *Statistical year book of Maldives 1997*. Malé: Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment.
- MPND (2002/2004). *Sixth national development plan 2001-2005, Republic of Maldives* (2nd, Reprint ed.). Malé: Ministry of Planning and National Development

- MPND (2004a). *Maldives 2003: The official year book of the Republic of Maldives*. Malé: Ministry of Planning and National Development, Republic of Maldives.
- MPND (2004b). *Vulnerability and poverty assessment II*. Malé: Ministry of Planning and National Development.
- MPND (2005). *Millennium development goals: Maldives country report 2005*. Malé: Ministry of Planning and National Development Plan.
- MPND (2007a). *Maldives - key indicators 2007* Retrieved January 9, 2008, from <http://planning.gov.mv>.
- MPND (2007b). *Maldives at a glance: September 2007* Retrieved November 1, 2007, from <http://www.planning.gov.mv>.
- MPND (2007c). *Maldives human development report: Challenges and responses* Retrieved February 12 2008, from <http://www.mv.undp.org>.
- MPND (2007d). *Seventh national development plan 2006-2010: Creating new opportunities* Retrieved November 3, 2007, from <http://www.planning.gov.mv>.
- MPND (2007e). *Statistical yearbook of Maldives 2007* Retrieved November 1, 2007, from <http://www.planning.gov.mv>.
- MPND and UNDP (1998). *Vulnerability and poverty assessment 1998*. Malé: Ministry of Planning and National Development in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Malé, Republic of Maldives.
- Mulgan, R. (1997). *Politics in New Zealand* (2nd ed.). Auckland: Auckland University Press.
- Mustafa, D. (1998). Structural causes of vulnerability to flood hazard in Pakistan. *Economic Geography*, 74(3), 289-305. Retrieved from <http://links.jstor.org>.
- NDMC (2007). *National disaster management centre: Republic of Maldives* Retrieved March 24 2008, from <http://www.ndmc.gov.mv>.
- Novak, M. (c1996). Concepts of poverty In E. Ooyen, S. M. Miller & S. A. Samad (Eds.), *Poverty: A global review: Handbook on international poverty research* (pp. 47-61). Oslo, Norway: Scandinavian University Press.
- O'Toole, K., & Burdess, N. (2005). Governance at community level: Small towns in rural Victoria. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 40(2), 239-254.
- Opotiki District Council (2005). *Governance statement 2005* Retrieved May 7, 2008, from <http://www.odc.govt.nz>.

- OUNHCHR (2006). *Development - Good governance* Retrieved June 13, 2007, from <http://www.ohchr.org>.
- Overton, J., & Thaman, R. R. (1999). Resources and the environment. In J. Overton & R. Scheyvens (Eds.), *Strategies for sustainable development, experiences from the Pacific* (pp. 19-32). London, New York: Zed Book.
- Overton, J., & van Diermen, P. (2003). Using quantitative techniques. In R. Scheyvens & D. Storey (Eds.), *Development fieldwork, A practical guide* (pp. 37-56). London: Sage Publications.
- Peters, B. G. (1993). Introducing the topic. In B. G. Peters & D. J. Savoie (Eds.), *Governance in a changing environment* Montreal McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Philip, D., & Rayhan, M. I. (2004). Vulnerability and poverty: What are the causes and how are they related? Retrieved June 5, 2008, from <http://www.zef.de>.
- Pierre, J. (2000). Introduction: Understanding governance. In J. Pierre (Ed.), *Debating governance; authority, steering and democracy* (pp. 1-10). Oxford Oxford University Press.
- Punch, K. F. (1998). *Introduction to social research quantitative & qualitative approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Ramachandran, M., & Eastman, J. R. (1996). *Applications of GIS to vulnerability mapping: A West African food security case study* Retrieved May 18, 2005, from <http://www.sbg.ac.at>.
- Ratuva, S. (1993). David vs Goliath. In E. Waddell, V. Naidu & E. Hau'ofa (Eds.), *A new Oceania: Rediscovering our sea of islands* (pp. 94-97). Suva, Fiji: Beake House.
- Ray, B. (1998). *Good governance, administrative reform and socio-economic realities: A South Pacific perspective* Retrieved March 16, 2005, from <http://rspas.anu.edu.au>.
- Raymond (2008, March 5). Government grants license to Digicel. *Vanuatu Daily Post*, from <http://www.dailypost.vu>.
- Reddy, M. (2006). Economic resilience building and good governance. In L. Briguglio, G. Cordina & E. J. Kisanga (Eds.), *Building the economic resilience of small states* (pp. 159-172). Malta, London: Island and Small States Institute of the University of Malta and the Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Reid, M. (1999). The central-local government relationship: The need for a framework? *Political Science*, 50(2), 165-188.
- Republic of Maldives (1998). The Constitution of the Maldives (English) Available from <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv>.

- Reserve Bank of Vanuatu (2007). *Reserve Bank of Vanuatu: Financial & economic news* Retrieved February 27, 2008, from <http://www.rbv.gov.vu>.
- Rhodes, R. A. W. (1997). *Understanding governance, policy networks, governance, reflexivity and accountability*. Buckingham: Open University.
- Rhodes, R. A. W. (2000). Governance and public administration. In J. Pierre (Ed.), *Debating governance, authority, steering and democracy* (pp. 54-90). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ringer, J. B. (1991). *An introduction to New Zealand government*. Christchurch: Hazard Press.
- Rooy, A. V. (2002). Strengthening civil society in developing countries. In V. Desai & R. B. Potter (Eds.), *The companion to development studies* (pp. 489-495). London: Arnold.
- Rosenau, J. N., & Czempiel, E.-O. (Eds.). (1992). *Governance without government: Order and change in world politics*. Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press.
- Royle, S. A. (2007). Island definitions and typologies. In G. Baldacchino (Ed.), *A world of islands* (pp. 33-56). Charlottetown, Canada: The Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island and Agenda Academic.
- Santiso, C. (2001). *Good governance and aid effectiveness: The World Bank and conditionality* Retrieved June 20, 2007, from <http://www.sti.ch>.
- Schneider, H. (1999). *Participatory governance: The missing link of poverty reduction* Retrieved April 3, 2007, from <http://oberon.sourceoecd.org>.
- Scott, C., Reid, M., Yeabsley, J., & Zöllner, E. (2004). *Positioning New Zealand local government* Retrieved May 1, 2008, from <http://www.localfutures.ac.nz>.
- Seers, D. (1969). The meaning of development *IDS Communication*, 44, 1-26. Retrieved from <http://www.ids.ac.uk>.
- Sen, A. (1979). *Equality of what?* Retrieved April 3, 2007, from <http://www.tannerlectures.utah.edu>.
- Sen, A. (1981). *Poverty and famines: An essay on entitlement and deprivation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sen, A. (1987). *Commodities and capabilities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Sen, G. (1997). *Empowerment as an approach to poverty* Retrieved September 17, 2007, from <http://www.globalhealth.harvard.edu>.

- Setboonsarng, S. (2005). *Child malnutrition as a poverty indicator: An evaluation in the context of different development interventions in Indonesia* Retrieved February 7, 2008, from <http://www.adbi.org>.
- SIDS (2003). *Vulnerability and small island states* Retrieved March 16, 2005, from <http://www.sidsnet.org>.
- SIDS (2004). *Environmental vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States* Retrieved March 15 2005, from www.sidnet.org.
- Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Smith, S. C. (2005). *Ending global poverty: A guide to what works*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- SOPAC (2000). *Environmental vulnerability index: Development and provisional indices and profiles for Fiji, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu* Retrieved August 4, 2007, from <http://www.cru.uea.ac.uk>.
- SOPAC (2002). *Towards managing environmental vulnerability in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)* Retrieved August 4, 2007, from <http://www.sidnet.org>.
- Springer, C., Gibbons, L., & Paeniu, B. (2002). *Social vulnerability of Small Island Developing States*. Paper presented at the Global Roundtable on Vulnerability and Small Island Developing States: Capacities to Mitigate Vulnerability. Retrieved August 22, 2007, from <http://www.sidnet.org>.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & U. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Statistics New Zealand (2006). *Quick stats about Bay of Plenty Region* Retrieved November 28, 2007, from <http://www.stats.govt.nz>.
- Statistics New Zealand (2008). *Hot off the press: Sub-national population estimates: Ad 30 June 2007* Retrieved May 9, 2008, from <http://www.stats.govt.nz>.
- Street, A., ActionAid, & Parihar, G. (2007, March). The UN cluster approach in the Pakistan earthquake response: An NGO response. *Humanitarian Exchange* Retrieved August 17, 2008, from <http://www.odihpn.org>.
- Susman, P., O'Keefe, P., & Wisner, B. (1983). Global disasters, a radical interpretation. In K. Hewitt (Ed.), *Interpretations of calamity* (pp. 263-283). London, Sydney: Allen & Unwin Inc.

- Swift, J. (2006). Why are rural people vulnerable to famine? *IDS Bulletin*, 37, Number 4(September 2006), 41-49. Retrieved from <http://www.ingentaconnect.com>.
- Szirmai, A. (2005). *The dynamics of socio-economic development: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- TAM (2007a). *Licences* Retrieved January 31, 2008, from <http://www.tam.gov.mv>.
- TAM (2007b). *Telecom statistics - October 2007* Retrieved January 31, 2008, from <http://www.tam.gov.mv>.
- Taylor, S. J., & Bogdan, R. (1998). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guide book and resource*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Telecom Vanuatu (2008). *Who is Telecom Vanuatu Ltd?* Retrieved March 6, 2008, from <http://www.vanuatu.com.vu>.
- Thaman, R. (1993). Moana nui, vanua and wantoks. In E. Waddell, V. Naidu & E. Hau'ofa (Eds.), *A new Oceania: Rediscovering our sea of islands*. Suva, Fiji: Beake House.
- The Commonwealth Foundation (1999). *Citizens and Governance, Civil Society in the New Millennium*. London: The Commonwealth Foundation.
- The President's Office of the Maldives (2007). *Maldives: Towards a new dawn* Retrieved December 13, 2007, from <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv>.
- Tisdell, C. (2000). Poverty in the Pacific islands. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 20(11/1274), 74-102. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com>.
- Todaro, M. P. (1985). *Economic development in the third world*. New York, London: Longman.
- Tolich, M., & Davidson, C. (1999). *Starting fieldwork: An Introduction to qualitative research in New Zealand*. Oxford, Auckland, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Turner, M., & Hulme, D. (1997). *Governance, administration & development making the state work*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Turvey, R. (2007). Vulnerability assessment of developing countries: The case of Small Island Developing States. *Development Policy Review*, 25(2), 243-264. Retrieved from <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com>.
- Twigg, J., & Bhatt, M. (Eds.). (1998). *Understanding vulnerability: South Asian perspectives*. International Technology Publications.

- UN-OHRLLS (n.d.). *List of Small Island Developing States* Retrieved March 6, 2007, from <http://www.un.org>.
- UN (1982). *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* Retrieved June 12 2007, from <http://www.un.org>.
- UN (1989). *United Nations conference on environment and development. General Assembly* Retrieved July 3, 2007, from <http://www.un.org>.
- UN (2002). *Common country assessment: Vanuatu* Retrieved March 3, 2008, from <http://www.un.org.fj>.
- UN (2006). *Overcoming economic vulnerability and creating employment*. New York: United Nations.
- UN (2008). *Millennium development goals* Retrieved February 28, 2008, from <http://www.un.org>.
- UNCTAD (1983). *The incidence of natural disasters in island developing countries*. Washington , DC: UN.
- UNDP (1997). *Good governance - and sustainable human development* Retrieved July 9, 2005, from <http://mirror.undp.org>.
- UNDP (2002). *The growing vulnerability of Small Island Developing States* Retrieved June 8, 2007, from <http://www.un.org>.
- UNDP (2004). *A global report: Reducing disaster risk, a challenge for development* New York: United Nations Development.
- UNDP (2006). *Human development report* Retrieved July 31, 2007, from <http://hdr.undp.org>.
- UNDP (2007). *Human development report 2007/2008, fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world* Retrieved December 13, 2007, from <http://hdr.undp.org>.
- UNEP (2002a). *Assessing human vulnerability due to environmental change: Concepts, issues, methods and case studies* Retrieved July 4, 2007, from <http://www.unep.org>.
- UNEP (2002b). *Global environment outlook 3* Retrieved March 11, 2007, from <http://www.grida.no>.
- UNEP, & SOPAC (2005). *Building resilience in SIDS: The environmental vulnerability index* Retrieved August 28, 2007, from <http://www.vulnerabilityindex.net>.
- UNESCO (1995-2007). *Education for all (EFA) international coordination* Retrieved February 28, 2008, from <http://portal.unesco.org>.

- UNICEF (2005). *Vanuatu: A situation analysis of children, women & youth*
Retrieved February 12, 2008, from <http://www.unicef.org>.
- USAID (2006). *USAID from the American people, democracy and governance*
Retrieved June 13, 2006, from <http://www.usaid.gov>.
- Vanuatu (1980). *Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu* Retrieved February 18, 2008, from <http://www.vanuatugovernment.gov.vu>.
- Vanuatu (1987). *Second national development plan, 1987-1991* (Vol. 1). Port-Vila, Vanuatu: National Planning & Statistics Office
- Vanuatu (1988). *Socio-economic development strategies and external assistance priorities*. Port Vila, Vanuatu: Government of the Vanuatu.
- Vanuatu (1999). *Education master plan 2000-2010* Retrieved February 28, 2008, from <http://www.paddle.usp.ac.fj>.
- Vanuatu (2000a). *The 1999 Vanuatu national population and housing census*. Port Vila: National Statistics Office.
- Vanuatu (2000b). *EFA 2000 assessment, country report* Retrieved February 28, 2008, from <http://www.unesco.org>.
- Vanuatu (2000c). *National Disaster Act* Retrieved March 8, 2008, from <http://faolex.fao.org>.
- Vanuatu (2001). *1999 national population census: Demographic analysis report*. Port Vila National Statistics Office.
- Vanuatu (2002). *Vanuatu infrastructure masterplan: Development framework*
Retrieved February 18, 2008, from <http://www.unescap.org>.
- Vanuatu (2003). *Decentralisation review commission report: Volume 1* Retrieved April 5, 2005, from <http://www.sria.com.vu>.
- Vanuatu (2005). *Republic of Vanuatu millennium development goals: Report 2005*. Port Vila: Government of the Vanuatu & United Nations Development Programme.
- Vanuatu (2006). *Budget 2006, fiscal strategy report: Incorporating the economic and fiscal update and the budget policy statement*: Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, Government of the Vanuatu.
- Vanuatu (2007a). *Agricultural census in Vanuatu 2006- snapshot* Retrieved December 14, 2007, from <http://www.spc.int>.
- Vanuatu (2007b). *Disaster risk reduction and disaster management: National action plan (2006 - 2007)* Retrieved August 28, 2006, from <http://www.sopac.org>.

- Vanuatu (2007c). *Vanuatu national health accounts 2005* Retrieved February 29, 2008, from <http://www.who.int>.
- Veitayaki, J. (1993). Balancing the book: How the other half lives. In E. Waddell, V. Naidu & E. Hau'ofa (Eds.), *A new Oceania: Rediscovering our sea of islands* (pp. 116-121). Suva, Fiji: Beake House.
- VNSO (2002a). *Statistical year book of Vanuatu - 2002*. Port Vila: Government of the Republic of Vanuatu.
- VNSO (2002b). *Vanuatu poverty survey: Analysis report 1998*. Port Vila: Vanuatu Statistics Office, Government of Vanuatu.
- VNSO (2007a). *2006 census of agriculture - Preliminary report* Retrieved February 26 2008, from <http://www.spc.int>.
- VNSO (2007b). *External trade statistics* Retrieved February 20, 2008, from <http://www.spc.int>.
- VNSO (2007c). *Trade highlights - 2nd quarter of 2006* Retrieved February 26, 2008, from <http://www.spc.int>.
- VNSO (2007d). *Vanuatu 2006 household income and expenditure survey: Preliminary report*. Port Vila: Vanuatu National Statistics Office, Vanuatu.
- VNSO (2008). *Tourism statistics* Retrieved February 20, 2008, from <http://www.spc.int>.
- Waugh, J. W. L. (2003). Economic development, financing. *Encyclopaedia of Public Administration and Public Policy*, 1(1), 367-369.
- Waugh, J. W. L. (2006). The political costs of failure in the Katrina and Rita disasters. In William L. Waugh Jr (Ed.), *Shelter from the storm: Repairing the national emergency management system after Hurricane Katrina* (Vol. 604, pp. 10-25). CA: Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications.
- Waugh, J. W. L. (2006). Preface. In William L. Waugh Jr (Ed.), *Shelter from the storm: Repairing the national emergency management system after Hurricane Katrina* (Vol. 604, pp. 6-9). CA: Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications.
- Weichselgartner, J. (2001). Disaster mitigation: The concept of vulnerability revisited. *Disaster Prevention and Management*, 10(2), 85-94. Retrieved from <http://www.emerald-library.com>.
- Weiss, T. G. (2000). Governance, good governance and global governance: Conceptual and actual challenges. *Third World Quarterly*, 21(5), 795-814. Retrieved from <http://www.proquest.umi.com>

- Wisner, B., Blaikie, P., Cannon, T., & Davis, I. (2004). *At risk: Natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters* (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Witter, M., Briguglio, L., & Bhuglah, A. (2002). *Measuring and managing the economic vulnerability of Small Island Developing States*. Paper presented at the UNDP Global Roundtable, Vulnerability and Small Island Developing States: Exploring Mechanisms for Partnerships. Retrieved May 13, 2007, from <http://www.undp.org>.
- Wood, G. A. (1988). *Governing New Zealand*. Auckland: Longman Paul.
- Woodward, K. (2002). Historical note. In B. J. Bresnihan & K. Woodward (Eds.), *Tufala gavman: Reminiscences from the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides* (pp. 16-72). Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of South Pacific.
- World Bank (1989). *Sub-Saharan Africa: From the crisis to sustainable development*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank (1992). *Governance and development*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- World Bank (2000/2001). *World development report 2001/2000 - Attacking poverty* Retrieved August 3, 2007, from <http://web.worldbank.org>.
- World Bank (2002a). *Empowerment and poverty reduction: A sourcebook* Retrieved September 19, 2007, from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org>.
- World Bank (2002b). *Reducing vulnerability and increasing opportunity: Social protection in Middle East and North Africa*: World Bank.
- World Bank (2006a). *Opportunities to improve social services in Vanuatu: Summary report* Retrieved January 13, 2008, from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org>.
- World Bank (2006b). *The World Bank in Maldives: Country brief* Retrieved February 4, 2008, from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org>.
- World Bank (2007a). 2007 world development indicators Retrieved July 28, 2007, from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org>.
- World Bank (2007b). A Decade of Measuring the Quality of Governance; Governance Matters 2007: Worldwide Governance Indicators, 1996-2007 Available from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org>.
- World Bank (2007c). *The World Bank, IBRD & IDA: Working for a world free of poverty* Retrieved May 3, 2007, from <http://www.worldbank.org>.

Zahir, F. (2007). NGOs, the state and development in the Maldives. Unpublished Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Development Studies. Victoria University of Wellington.

Appendices

Appendix I: Details of the preliminary field trips in the Maldives

	Atolls	No. of visits	No. of island visited	Sources of methods used		People visited	Date visited
				Open discussion	observations		
1	<i>Kaafu</i> Atoll (Central Region)	1	1 island (<i>Guraidhoo</i>)	Discussions and very informal interviews with individuals	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	6 tsunami affected individuals	22-Nov-05
2	<i>Vaavu</i> Atoll (Central Region)	1	2 islands (<i>Felidhoo</i> and <i>Keyodhoo</i>)	Discussions and very informal interviews with individuals	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	13 tsunami affected individuals	23-Nov-05
3	North <i>Alifu</i> Atoll (Central Region)	1	2 islands (<i>Mathiveri</i> and <i>Bodufulhadhoo</i>)	Discussions and very informal interviews with individuals	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	7 tsunami affected individuals	24-Nov-05
4	<i>Haa Dhaalu</i> Atoll (Northern Region)	2	2 islands (<i>Hanimaadhoo</i> and <i>Makunudhoo</i>)	Discussions with individuals and two committees	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	2 island chiefs and 4 individuals and two committees	18- 21 Dec 2005
5	<i>Haa Alifu</i> Atoll (Northern Region)	1	2 islands (<i>Kelaa</i> and <i>lhavandhoo</i>)	Discussions with individuals and two committees	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	meeting with members of two committees and chiefs	18-21 Dec 2005
6	<i>Meemu</i> Atoll (South Central Region)	1	1 island (<i>Muli</i>)	Discussions with individuals and two committees	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	meeting with members of two committees and chiefs	24-25 Dec 2005
7	<i>Laamu</i> Atoll (South Central Region)	2	2 islands (<i>Fonadhoo</i> and <i>Gan</i>)	Discussions with individuals and two committees	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	meeting with members of two committees, chiefs and islanders	4-5 Jan 2006
8	<i>Thaa</i> Atoll (South Central Region)	1	2 islands (<i>Veymandoo</i> and <i>Thimarafushi</i>)	Discussions with individuals and two committees	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	meeting with members of two committees, chiefs and islanders	5-7 Jan 2006
9	<i>Raa</i> Atoll (North Central Region)	2	1 island (<i>Ungoofaaru</i>)	Discussions with individuals and two committees	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	meeting with members of two committees, chiefs and islanders	29-30 Jan 2006
10	<i>Noonu</i> Atoll (North Central Region)	1	1 island 2 communities [<i>Kendhikolhudhoo</i> (<i>Kendhikolhu</i> and <i>Kulhudhoo</i> communities)]	Discussions with individuals and two committees	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	meeting with members of two committees, chiefs and islanders	30-31 Jan 2006
11	<i>Faafu</i> Atoll (South Central Region)	1	1 island (<i>Nilandhoo</i>)	Discussions with individuals and two committees	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	meeting with members of two committees, chiefs and islanders	4-Feb-06
12	<i>Seenu</i> Atoll (Southern Region)	1	4 islands (<i>Maradhoo</i> , <i>Maradhoofeydhoo</i> , <i>Hulhudhoo</i> and <i>Medhoo</i>)	Discussions with individuals, NGOs, two committees and members of political parties	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Discussions with members of two committees, NGOs and political parties and individuals	1-3 Feb 2006

Appendix II: Details of visits, meetings and interviews in Raa atoll of the Maldives

	Name of the island visited	Size of Island		Sources of methods used			Participants	Date visited
		Population	Land (hectare)	Interviews	Open discussion	Observations		
1	<i>Ungoofaaru</i>	2,989	28.1	3 interviews	1 Large and 3 small group discussions	Observations made on facilities and living conditions and visits to internally displaced community living in temporary tents	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, fishermen, chiefs, teachers, health officials, headmaster, magistrate, other local individuals	24-26-Feb-06
2	<i>Maduvvari</i>	1,568	16.40	4 interviews	1 Large and 2 small group discussions	Observations made on facilities and living conditions and visits to internally displaced community living in temporary tents	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, Fishermen, chiefs, teachers, health officials, headmaster, magistrate, other local individuals	24-26-Feb-06
3	<i>Meedhoo</i>	1,731	30.60	3 interviews	1 large group discussion	Observations made on facilities and living conditions and visits to internally displaced community living in temporary tents and had casual chat with some of them	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, fishermen, chiefs, teachers, headmasters, health officials, other local individuals	27 Feb- 1 March 2006
4	<i>Kinolhas</i>	345	44.90	2 interviews	1 large and 1 small group discussions	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, Fishermen, chiefs, teachers, headmasters, health officials, and other local individuals	2-4 March 2006
5	<i>Fainu</i>	251	50.10	2 interviews	1 large group discussion	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, teachers, health officials,	5-7 March 2006

	Name of the island visited	Size of Island		Sources of methods used			Participants	Date visited
		Population	Land (hectare)	Interviews	Open discussion	Observations		
							headmaster, magistrate, other local individuals	
6	<i>Inguraidhoo</i>	1,277	35.80	2 interviews	1 large group discussion	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, teachers, health officials, carpenters, other local individuals	8-10 March 2006
7	<i>Innamaadhoo</i>	537	27.80	4 interviews	1 large group discussion	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, magistrate, health officials, carpenters, other local individuals	11-13 March 2006
8	<i>Rasmaadhoo</i>	485	22.70	3 interviews	1 large group discussion	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, teachers, health officials, other local individuals	14-16 March 2006
9	<i>Maakurath</i>	877	43.40	3 interviews	1 large group discussion	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, teachers, health officials, other local individuals	17-20 March 2006
10	<i>Vaadhoo</i>	320	31.30	5 interviews	1 large and 1 small group discussions	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, headmistress, teachers, health officials, fishermen other local individuals	27- 30 March 2006
11	<i>Alifushi</i>	1,966	45.63	3 interviews	1 large and 1 small group discussions	Observations made on facilities and living conditions and visit internally displaced community living in	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, teachers, health officials, carpenters fisherman	31 March- 2 April 2006

	Name of the island visited	Size of Island		Sources of methods used			Participants	Date visited
		Population	Land (hectare)	Interviews	Open discussion	Observations		
						temporary tents and had casual chat with some of them	other local individuals	
12	<i>Hulhudhuffaar</i>	1,516	48.60	4 interviews	1 large group discussions	Observations made on facilities and living conditions and visit internally displaced community living in temporary tents and had casual chat with some of them	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, headmaster, teachers, health officials, fishermen other local individuals	3-5 April 2006
13	<i>Rasgetheemu</i>	505	30.40	5 interviews	1 large group discussion	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, headmaster, teachers, health officials, fishermen other local individuals	6-10 April 2006
14	<i>Angolhitheemu</i>	272	31.70	2 interviews	1 large group discussion	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, headmaster, teachers, health officials, fishermen other local individuals	6-10 April 2006
15	<i>Kandholhudhoo</i>	Population displaced to other islands due to tsunami	4.46	1 interview	1 small group discussion	Observations made on temporary shelters in 5 islands where its community is living	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, , teachers,	11-12 April 2006

Appendix III: Details of visits, meetings and interviews in Shaviyani atoll of the Maldives

	Name of the island visited	Size of island		Sources of methods used			Participants	Date visited
		Population	Land (hectare)	Interviews	Open discussion	Observations		
1	<i>Maroshi</i>	496	26.72	1 interview	1 Large group discussion	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Members of two committees, NGOs, teachers, fishermen, other local individuals	21-26-March-06
2	<i>Foakaidhoo</i>	1,204	55.55	2 interviews	1 Large group discussion	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, teachers, health officials, fishermen magistrate, other local individuals	23 March-06
3	<i>Feevah</i>	748	79.17	4 interviews	1 large group discussion	Observations made on facilities and living conditions	Members of two committees, NGOs, Youth clubs, chiefs, teachers, health officials, other local individuals	24 March 2006

Appendix IV: Details of the fieldwork in Vanuatu

	Organization/island Visited	No. of Appointments/meetings	Methods used			Participants	Date visited
			Interviews	Open discussions	Observation		
1	Emalus Campus	2		Discussion on research area and fieldwork.		A staff member and professor	5/9/2006
2	Emalus Campus	5		Discussions on related different issues	Observation on village life style, mode of transports, and roads	a Security personal, few students and a taxi driver	5 /9/2006
3	Emalus Campus	1		Discussion on research area and fieldwork		Professor	6/9/2006
4	Min. of Education	1		Discussion on research area and fieldwork		Staff	6/9/2006
5	Department of Environment	1	Interview				7/9/2006
6	Vanuatu Statistics Office	1	Interview	Discussion on research area and fieldwork			7/9/2006
7	Local Market	3	Interviews		Observation on life style	Individual farmers	7/9/2006
8	Department of Strategic department	1		Discussion on research area and fieldwork			8/9/06
9	National Disaster Management Office	1		Discussion on research area and fieldwork			8/9/2006
10	Department of economic sector planning	1		Discussion on research area and fieldwork			11/9/06
11	Shefa Provincial Council	1		Discussion on research area and fieldwork			`20/9/06
	Visit to TAFEA Province, Tanna Island						12-15/9/06
12	Department of Cooperative, TAFEA Province	1	Interview				13/9/06
13	TAFEA Provincial Government	1	Interview			Two officials from the Provincial Government	13/9/06

	Organization/island Visited	No. of Appointments/meetings	Methods used			Participants	Date visited
			Interviews	Open discussions	Observation		
14	Local Farmer	2	Interview		Observation on life style		13/9/06
15	Provincial Agricultural and Fisheries officers	2	Interview				13/9/06
16	Health Department for the Province	1	Interview		Observation on the condition of health facilities	Senior staff of Provincial Hospital	13/9/06
17	<i>Lenakel</i> Primary School	1	Interview		Observation on the services & facilities	Head teacher	13/9/06
18	<i>Lenakel</i> Junior Sec. School	1				Principal	13/9/06
19	<i>Lanakel</i> Chief	1	Interview		Observation on life style	Local chief	14/9/06
20	<i>Tuhu</i> Village	1		Discussion	Observation on the services & facilities	Head Teacher & Teachers	14/9/06
21	Divine	1		Discussion	Observation on the services & facilities	Head Teacher & Teachers	14/9/06
22	<i>Lamakarak</i> Community	1		Discussion	Observation on life style	Tribe leaders & members of the community	14/9/06
23	Locals	3		Discussion	Observation on life style	Two shop keepers and one individual family who sells home- made foods in a hut stall.	
24	Inland village tribe	1		Discussion		Tribe leader (chief) and members of the community	
	Returned from <i>Tanna</i>						15/9/06
26	Church member	1		Discussion			16/9/06
27	Malay Village and Hideaway Island	7		Discussion	Observation on the life style	Three women at the village market, a farmer, a shop keeper, ferry captain and leader of Muslim	16/9/06

	Organization/island Visited	No. of Appointments/meetings	Methods used			Participants	Date visited
			Interviews	Open discussions	Observation		
						community	
28	Vila and Iririki island	3		Discussion	Had observation on life style	One female secondary teacher, a guard and a ferry captain	17/9/06
29	Cultural Centre	1		Discussion		Director of the centre	18/9/06
30	Ombudsman	1		Discussion		Acting Ombudsman	19/9/06
31	Vanuatu Statistical office	1		Discussion		National Statistician, and two other officials, including one external consultant	
32	Transparency International	2		Discussion		Manager and a local official	20/9/06
33	Ministry of Health	1		Discussion		Statistician	20/9/06
34	Public Service Commissioner	1					21/9/06
35	YCI	1					22/9/06
36	Vila town Council of Chiefs	1	Interview			Chairman of the council, Chief John Tari Lama	22/9/06
37	Department of Provincial affairs and local governments	1		Discussion		Director	22/9/06
38	VANGO	1	Interview			Director	25/9/06
39	Foundation for the People's of the South Pacific, Vanuatu	1	Interview			Manager for the Governance project	25/9/06
40	Vanuatu Family Health Association	1	Interview	Discussion		Director and a Senior health official	25/9/06

Appendix V: Details of visits, meetings and interviews in Fiji

	Organisation/island Visited	No. of Appointments/meetings	Methods used			Participants	Date visited
			Interviews	Open discussions	Observation		
1	USP Fiji	3		Discussion on research area and fieldwork		Some Professors	1/9/2006
2	Levuka (an outer island and the old capital)	7		Discussions with a few local individuals	Had chance to make observation on village life style, mode of transports, and roads	Taxi and bus drivers, youths, teachers and farmers	2-3 /9/2006
3	USP	1		Discussion on research area and fieldwork		Lecturer	3/9/2006
4	USP	1		Discussion on research area and fieldwork		Professor	4/9/2006
5	CCF	1	had an interview			Staff	4/9/2006
6	USP	1		Discussion on research area and fieldwork		Professor	27/9/2006
7	TI	1		Had a chat over the phone			
8	PIANGO	1		Had a chat over the phone			
9	Nandi	5		Discussions with a few local individuals		Taxi driver, hotel receptionists, restaurant waiters and hotel guards	27-28/9/2006

Appendix VI: Guide used in the field for methods and sources of data collection and main areas for discussion during the interviews and discussions

Areas	Issues	Secondary sources	Informal Interviews	Open-ended discussions	Observation
Governance/Policies	Correlations between governance and vulnerability	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	Impacts of the policies on vulnerabilities
	Measures taken to reduce vulnerabilities vulnerability (protection, preparedness, relief and rehabilitations)	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue, required policies/ changes (key persons govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities/ roles/involvement	Impacts of the policies on vulnerabilities /success/failures
	Existing governance system and the appropriateness for the reduction of the vulnerability	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Required changes to improve the policies	Reports Official & unofficial materials, literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Expected reaction in terms of cultural, spiritual and societal values to required government system and policy changes	Reports Official & unofficial materials, literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Possible practices and policies that can be adopted as models	Reports Official & unofficial materials, literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
Vulnerability	Perception on vulnerability/development		Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Core areas of vulnerability in the country/communities	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Most vulnerable	Country reports,	Perceptions on the issue	Perceptions of the	Observatory

Areas	Issues	Secondary sources	Informal Interviews	Open-ended discussions	Observation
	communities/people within the communities	Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	(key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	CBOs/communities	findings from the island communities
	Possible practices and policies that can be adopted as models	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	Observation of the communities/ livelihoods/services available
Development and Vulnerability	Impact of vulnerability on the development	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	Observation of the communities/ livelihoods/services available
	Vulnerability to be tackled for development the communities	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Development plans for the reduction of vulnerability	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Possible practices and policies that can be adopted as models	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
Poverty and Vulnerability	Poverty caused by vulnerability	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	Observation of the communities/ livelihoods/services available
	Priority in tackling, poverty or vulnerability	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Possible practices and policies that can be adopted as models	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	Observation of the communities/ livelihoods/services available

Areas	Issues	Secondary sources	Informal Interviews	Open-ended discussions	Observation
Civil Society and vulnerability	Roles of NGOs/ Committees in reducing vulnerability	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs /key persons	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	Some direct observations on their roles and involvement
	Involvement and level of participation with the public /private sectors	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	Some direct observations on their roles and involvement
	Difficulties and problems of partnership with the public/private sectors for the reduction of vulnerability	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Required changes in the system to improve partnership	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Experienced vulnerabilities (how, when, where, and how managed to survive and who helped)	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Advantages/disadvantages of being in a dispersed and small community	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Roles of individuals in the cause of good governance and to reduce vulnerability of the state and individuals	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Fulfilment of daily needs and basis of livelihoods	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	
	Access to services	Country reports, Policy documents, other official & unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	

Areas	Issues	Secondary sources	Informal Interviews	Open-ended discussions	Observation
	Possible practices and policies that can be adopted as models	Country reports, Policy documents, other official& unofficial materials, academic literature	Perceptions on the issue (key persons from govt organisations/CBOs)	Perceptions of the CBOs/communities	

Appendix VII: Request for an advice to obtaining research permit from Vanuatu

10 August, 2006

Mr John Niroa
Director of Secondary and Tertiary Education
Ministry of Education
Government of Vanuatu
Port Vila
Vanuatu

Dear Mr Niroa

RE: PhD Research student's visit

My good friend and colleague, Dr Kabini Sanga has advised that I should write to you about my PhD student who wishes to visit Port Vila for three weeks to do part of his field research. He is hoping to visit in a few weeks time.

The student, Mr Ahmed Hussein is from the Republic of the Maldives. He is researching vulnerability and governance in small island states. He has completed his field research in the Maldives and wanted to speak to some key people in Port Vila to obtain a comparative perspective.

As a Commonwealth country citizen he is permitted a 3 month visitor entry but to do research he needs to apply for a permit.

I would be most grateful if you could advise on how best to obtain the research permit.

Thanking you for your assistance,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vijay Naidu".

Professor Vijay Naidu

Director, Development Studies
School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences.

SCHOOL OF EARTH SCIENCES Te Kura Tātai Aro Whenua

PO Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand

Phone: +64-4-463 5337 Fax: +64-4-463 5186 Website: www.vuw.ac.nz

Appendix VIII: Ethics approval

MEMORANDUM

Phone 0-4-463 5676
Fax 0-4-463 5209
Email Allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz

TO	Ahmed Shukry Hussain
COPY TO	
FROM	Dr Allison Kirkman, Convener, Human Ethics Committee
DATE	November 14, 2005
PAGES	1
SUBJECT	Approval: No 143/2005, Governance and vulnerability in Small Island States.

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Standing Committee of the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved and this approval continues until 30 November 2006. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Allison Kirkman
Convener

Appendix IX: Consent form

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Title of project: Governance and Vulnerability in Small Island States

I have been given and have understood objectives of this research. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this research study (before data collection and analysis is complete) without having to give reasons.

I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher, the supervisor and the person who transcribes the tape recordings of our interview, the published results will not use my name, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me. I understand that the tape recording of interviews will be electronically wiped at the end of the project unless I indicate that I would like them returned to me.

I understand that the data I provide will not be used for any other purpose or released to others without my written consent.

I would like the tape recordings of my interview returned to me at the conclusion of the project.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I would like to receive a summary of the results of this research when it is completed.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to take part in this research

signed:

name of participant
(please print clearly)

Date:

SCHOOL OF EARTH SCIENCES Te Kura Tātai Aro Whenua

PO Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand

Phone +64-4-463 5337 Fax +64-4-463 5186 Website www.geo.vuw.ac.nz

Appendix X: Participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet for a Study of Governance and Vulnerability in Small Island States

Researcher: Ahmed Shukry Hussain: Program of Development Studies, School of Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington

I am a PhD student in Development Studies, at School of Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. The area of my study is 'Governance and Vulnerability in Small Island States'. The study aims to identify what are the most applicable and practical measures for Small Island developing states in order to reduce the vulnerabilities of the state and civil society. The study will be carried out through a comparative study of policies and best practices of three countries, two small island developing states, the Maldives and Vanuatu, and one developed country, New Zealand. The university has agreed on my area of study and granted ethics approval to carry out the study.

Part of my study will involve meeting with individuals and groups from island communities, government organisations, and community based committees and NGOs and conducting informal interviews. Each interview will occur at a place most suited for the participants and it will take about an hour approximately. While I take notes I may want to tape your interviews with your permission. It is very important to point out that the participation in this study is voluntary and based on participants' willingness. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without question before the data is analysed.

Responses and information collected will form the basis of my thesis and direct names of individuals, committees and NGOs will not be used in the data analysis or in the thesis, therefore, it will not be possible for you to be identified personally. All material collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides my supervisors and me will have access to it. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the School of Earth Sciences and deposited in the University Library. It is intended that one or more articles will be submitted for publication in journals.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about my study, please contact my supervisors, Professor Vijay Naidu, Director of Development Studies, School of Earth Sciences and Dr. Teresia Teaiwa, Director of Pacific Studies, School of Maori, Pacific and Samoan Studies at Victoria University, P O Box 600, Wellington.

Ahmed Shukry Hussain
School of Earth Sciences
Victoria University of Wellington
P.O. Box: 600
Wellington, New Zealand
Contact: Mobile: 64 4 210718289

Signed:

SCHOOL OF EARTH SCIENCES Te Kura Tātai Aro Whenua
PO Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand
Phone +64-4-463 5337 Fax +64-4-463 5186 Website www.geo.vuw.ac.nz